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Literature.

Independent, Oct 20/81

The prompt mention in our list of "Books of the Week" will be considered by us an equivalent to their publishers for all volumes received. The interests of our readers will guide us in the selection of works for further notice.

BOULGER'S HISTORY OF CHINA.*

THIS work comes into the market at a time when the interest of all well-wishers of China in its progress in the highest and best directions is growing. Such persons will hail a good account of the history of the Black-haired Race, as the Chinese style themselves, beginning with their earliest records and coming down through the centuries to the present day. Their chronology, their settlement on the banks of the Yellow River, the succession of the twenty-six dynasties which have successively swayed them, and the cause of their survival to the present day, while every other ancient nation has passed away, all form topics which make the history of China peculiarly interesting to students of national life.

Mr. Boulger has not aimed to go into all these topics; and we, therefore, ought not to look for full answers to inquiries upon them. He tells us in a prefatory note that the principal portion of his work has been translated from the "*Histoire Générale de la Chine*," by Père Mailla. The foot-notes show that he has also consulted the carefully-written work of G. Pauthier (Paris, 1839) and some other books. It, therefore, makes no pretensions to being drawn from original sources and is only a careful digest of what has been prepared by others. The great work of Père Mailla is a translation from a native compend, called "*Tung-kien Kang-muh*," or, "Survey of History," and was printed in twelve quarto volumes, in 1777—1783, thirty years after his death. It has been largely drawn upon by subsequent writers upon China.

Mr. Boulger has brought to his task a desire to judge fairly by the Chinese and to give his readers the means of getting a clear view of the changes they have undergone. The most prominent characters among the long list of sovereigns have been described at some length, and the great dynasties they founded or upheld come more into view than the shorter ones. His book is, consequently, more a series of biographical sketches of these men than a full narrative of events. Among these distinguished men the great warrior who, about the times of the Maccabees, reduced the feudal states of the Chow dynasty to his sway and made the Middle Kingdom a single nation stands first. His deeds left a permanent and beneficial impression on his people.

The independent kingdoms which had parceled out the empire amongst themselves were destroyed, their dynasties exterminated, and the unity of the empire achieved. Not free from the vanity of mortals, he sought by the high-sounding title *Tsin Chi Hoangti, First Sovereign Emperor of the Tsins*, to perpetuate the memory of a reign which might well be left to stand on its own merits. Like most Chinese rulers, he patronized astronomy and revised the calendar. He abolished useless ceremonies, reduced the officials to obedience, and introduced great economy of administration. He disarmed the provinces and embellished the capital with gardens and palaces. Ten thousand men could be drawn up in order of battle in one of the courts of his Palace of Delight. He districted the empire into thirty-six provinces and prepared to visit them in person. He refused to divide these provinces among his children and blood relations in fief, not believing that the country could be ruled by a divided sovereignty. "Good government," he declared, "is impossible under a multiplicity of masters." The system of strict subordination which now exists is, with a few modifications, that devised by Hoangti and remains as a sufficient evidence that he possessed the genius of a great ruler.

The founder of the Han dynasty, the first two emperors of the Tang dynasty, the founder of the Sung dynasty, and Kublai Khan, who established his sway on its ruins, are each of them mentioned so fully that the reader gets a fair idea of their deeds, their personal character, and their claims to the honorable places claimed for them. In doing so, Mr. Boulger contents himself with the facts mentioned in his authorities and lets the Chinese describe their own heroes. Some of these men are well worthy of being known, and their existence and deeds will, no doubt, be quite new to most readers.

The work is pleasantly written, too, and will afford those who take it up such a survey of Chinese history as will answer their reasonable inquiries; but the author's qualifications for his task are deficient in two or three important points. Among these, an entire ignorance of the language and, consequently, an inability to judge of the value and bearing of many things mentioned in his authorities make him liable to many mistakes. He has never lived among the people, and this rather weakens his judgment of their attainments in self-government and the security given to life and property by the laws and the rulers who execute them. An author cannot get a satisfactory conclusion on these points from others.

Neither Mailla nor Pauthier gives any Chinese characters, and the mistakes arising from confusing their sounds are numerous. On page 42 Mr. Boulger speaks of King Wang the Third, but the names of the two previous sovereigns with this title are totally unlike. On page 6 he has confounded the name of *Hoangti*, the Yellow Emperor, with *Hoangti*, the common title for emperor, not knowing that the word *Hoang* or *Hwang* is represented by different characters, and that no monarch has ever been styled the Yellow Emperor since B. C. 2597.

On page 27, after discussing the origin of the name China, he adds that "Cathay or Khitay (the Russian name) was the name given by those coming overland from the north." The word Cathay is derived, through the Persians or Central Asian peoples, from the Chinese name *Ki-tan*, a Tartar or Toungusian tribe, which ruled Northern China from A. D. 907 to 1125, under nine sovereigns. The word *Tartar*, he says, "is used in its commonly accepted sense for all the tribes in N. E. Asia"; but the truth is that several distinct nations are confounded under this term, just as the word *Indian* in America covers a great deal of ignorance when it includes Algonquins, Aztecs, and Araucarians.

This ignorance of the language has also led him into much confusion in his mode of writing proper names, both of places and people. The Chinese write the family name first, and then the given name or the style by whichever they choose to be known. An official or a literary man selects the latter when he enters active life, and drops the name used in youth. After death, his children bestow another name, by which his spirit is worshiped in the ancestral hall. A deceased emperor is known ever after by his temple-name (*miao-hao*) in history, and his reign-name is dropped whenever he is mentioned. These names are all given to him with some reference to their meanings, and during some dynasties it was the fashion to change the reign-name on any unusual event. Kao-tsung, of the Tang dynasty (A. D. 650—684), took fourteen such reign-names (*nien-hao*), which has caused some confusion in referring to him. Since the accession of Tai-tsu, of the Ming dynasty, in A. D. 1368, only one reign-name has been employed. The present Emperor in 1875 selected the name of *Kwang-sü* for his reign, meaning Illustrious Succession. He is the cousin of his childless predecessor, and this name alludes to a break in the regular descent, the first in the Manchu dynasty. Apparently unaware of all these points, Mr. Boulger has written the names without rule or uniformity, as Tongcho, Tsow Tsow, or Lichimin, instead of Tong Cho, Tsow Tsow, and Li-chi-min, and similar confusion prevails in the imperial titles. In a historian of a people and an empire of the importance of the Middle Kingdom some knowledge of the language and usages of its inhabitants is requisite to an accurate rendering and investigation of his authorities.

In looking through the foot-notes, one can detect several inaccuracies of a minor

*HISTORY OF CHINA. By DEMETRIUS CHARLES BOULGER, B. A., S., author of "England and Russia in Central Asia," "Yakoob Bey of Kashgar," etc. Vol. I. London, W.: H. Allan & Co. 1881. Pp. viii, 604.

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HISTORY

OF

CHINA.

BY

DEMETRIUS CHARLES BOULGER
(MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY),
AUTHOR OF
"ENGLAND AND RUSSIA IN CENTRAL ASIA," "YAKOOB BEG OF KASHGAR,"
ETC. ETC.

VOL. I.

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TO

SIR RUTHERFORD ALCOCK, K.C.B.,

ETC. ETC.,

WHOSE KNOWLEDGE OF THE COUNTRY, AND

SYMPATHY WITH THE PEOPLE

CONSTITUTE HIM AN AUTHORITY UPON THE SUBJECT OF CHINA,

THIS HISTORY IS DEDICATED BY THE

AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

It is unnecessary for me to detain the reader with any lengthy remarks by way of introduction to this history. The Chinese Empire presents for our consideration one of the most complicated of existing problems; and the subject is of growing rather than waning importance. In dealing with its history we are not discussing the fortunes of some Empire that has long disappeared, nor are we seeking to discern the future of a race that has lost or forgotten the capacity of government; but we are treating of a state and a people that apparently were never, during the long course of their national existence, more powerful and flourishing than they are at this very day.

Gibbon has truly said, in his immortal work, that "China has been illustrated by the labours of the French," and that statement is almost as true now

as it was when he wrote the words. It is they also who have at all periods been more willing than we have been to recognise the innate strength and greatness of the Chinese nation. The task of supplying what has appeared to be a want in our literature, and of popularising the subject of Chinese history, has been very congenial to me; and, if I have only succeeded in making the subject in any degree as much a cause of pleasure and instruction to others as its study has proved to myself, I may indulge a hope that something of the reproach of being behind our neighbours in the interest we take in China may be removed.

The point (about A.D. 1350) where this first volume closes leaves the events of the last five centuries still to be described, and I look forward to having the second volume completed before the close of the present year.

In conclusion, I may be permitted to state that all quotations—principally speeches, &c.—in the body of the work, where no reference is given, have, without exception, been translated from the "Histoire Générale" of De Mailla.

February 1, 1881.

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ERRATA.

P. 266, line 28, *for* intrigue *read* intriguer.
P. 492, line 5, *for* Niutche *read* Niuche.

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THE HISTORY OF CHINA.

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY AGES.

Mythical Period.—Fohi.—Hoangti.—Yao, Chun and Yu.—The First Dynasty.—Ching Tang.—The Second Dynasty.—Its Gradual Decline and Fall.—The Third Dynasty.—Emperor Mou Wang.—A Bad Emperor.—Revival of the Chow Dynasty.—Inroads of the Tartars.—A Weak Emperor.—The Decline of the Chows.—Feudalism.—Summary of Events.

The origin of all great peoples and empires is to be discovered buried in the mists of a more or less remote antiquity, made tangible alone for us by the preservation of myths and legends, which afford in their similarity a proof of the affinity of all the races on the earth. The Chinese, like the Jews and the ancient Egyptians alone, claim to trace back their national existence to a period centuries before Solomon erected his Temple, or Homer collected the ballads relating to the Trojan War, and turned them into his immortal epic. From a date anterior to that accepted

for the occurrence of the Flood of Noah, the people of China possess a history which preserves the names of kings and conquerors, and describes remarkable events with an appearance of exactitude that would almost compel credence. In comparison with their institutions those of Ancient Egypt and Assyria have only moderate claims to antiquity, and the states of Greece and Rome were but the creations of yesterday. The observer might well stand aghast if he were called upon to follow the exact details in the history of a people and an empire, which were great and definite in form nearly five thousand years ago. It would be not less impossible than weak to demand of the human faculty so severe a strain. The subject would soon become monotonous, as each succeeding cycle of prosperity and military vigour or of depression and decay, following each other with unvarying regularity, was described. But the extreme age of the institutions is one key to the history of the Empire, and the student, fully impregnated with the spirit of that fact, will have done much towards mastering the rest of the subject. To such a one the later course of the history will present few difficulties. It will be almost as an open book.*

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* For the period embraced in this chapter the chief authorities that need be quoted are the "Choukin" (Chinese History, translated by P. Gaubil); P. Mailla's "Histoire Générale;" and "La Chine," par G. Pauthier. The celebrated "Litaikisse" (in a hundred volumes, a copy of which is at Paris) has only been translated in portions. If the reader wishes to know what conception Chinese historians had of their duties, the following story taken from the Preface to Maillà's great work may throw some light upon the subject:—"In the reign of the Emperor Ling Wang of the Chow dynasty, B.C. 548,

The earliest ancestors of the Chinese are supposed to have been a nomad people in the province of Shensi. Among these there appeared several leaders, endowed with high abilities and aspirations, who induced their kinsmen to settle in villages, and to follow the pursuits of trade and agriculture. The germ of the Chinese race and government was, we may assume,

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Changkong, Prince of Tsi, became enamoured of the wife of Tsouichow, a general, who resented the affront and killed the prince. The historians attached to the household of the prince recorded the facts, and named Tsouichow as the murderer. On learning this the general caused the principal historian to be arrested and slain and appointed another in his place. But as soon as the new historian entered upon his office he recorded the exact facts of the whole occurrence, including the death of his predecessor and the cause of his death. Tsouichow was so much enraged at this that he ordered all the members of the Tribunal of History to be executed. But at once the whole literary class in the principality of Tsi set to work exposing and denouncing the conduct of Tsouichow, who soon perceived that his wiser plan would be to reconstitute the Tribunal and to allow it to follow its own devices." What could be finer, too, than the following reply, given fifteen centuries later, by the President of the Tribunal of History of the Empire to the Tang Emperor Taitsong, who asked if he might be permitted to see what was written about himself in the State memoirs? "Prince," said the President, "the Historians of the Tribunal write down the good and the bad actions of princes, their praiseworthy and also their reprehensible words, and everything that they have done, good or bad, in their administration. We are exact and irreproachable on this point, and none of us dare be wanting in this respect. This impartial severity ought to be the essential attribute of history, if it is wished that she should be a curb upon princes and the great, and that she should prevent them committing faults. But I do not know that any Emperor up to the present has ever seen what was written about him." To this the Emperor said, "But supposing I did nothing good, or that I happened to commit some bad action, is it you, President, who would write it down?" "Prince, I should be overwhelmed with grief; but, being entrusted with a charge so important as that of presiding over the Tribunal of the Empire, could I dare to be wanting in my duty?" These two stories may suffice to show the spirit in which the earlier Chinese historians undertook their work.

to be found among these rude tribes wandering over the province of Shensi. Among them, increasing both in numbers and in power, the necessities of the government of a community produced several rulers, whose lineaments the Chinese historians have depicted for us as being similar to those of animals and other unnatural combinations, until at last there came Fohi, the first great Chinese Emperor. He also to a great extent belongs to the mythical period, being represented as having the body of a dragon and the head of an ox.* Still Confucius in his history accepted him as one of the early rulers of the country, and he is generally credited with having instituted the rite of marriage, and numerous other social and moral reforms. His reign is described as having been a succession of benefits for the people.† Among his chief exploits may be mentioned the fact that he carried his influence to the Eastern Sea, and he selected as his capital the town of Chintou, which is identified with the modern Chinchow in Honan. To him succeeded Chinnong, who carried on the great work Fohi had commenced, but in a few years he changed the capital from Chintou to Kiofoo, a town in Shantung. According to Mailla, he was succeeded by the celebrated Hoangti, according to other authorities, by several rulers whose

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* The face is sufficiently human, however, as will be seen on reference to a plate at the end of M. Pauthier's first volume, taken from the collection of the Père Amiot.

† The exact date of his reign is uncertain. Mailla puts it at B.C. 2953–2838; Pauthier at B.C. 3468–3218. Professor Douglas, in his excellent article in the new edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," wisely ignores specific dates until the time of Yaou.

names have been almost forgotten; but in any case it is incontestable that the individuality of Hoangti is much more tangible than that of any of his predecessors.

Hoangti was no sooner raised to the supreme place than he was called upon to compete with several rivals. He triumphed over them in battle, and rendered his success the more decisive by the remarkable moderation he evinced when the contest had been concluded in his favour. Recognising with rare foresight that a beneficent prince has no public enemy among his own people, he carried on his wars not with the misled soldiers, but with their leaders, inspired either by envy at his success or by the ambition to emulate it. In one of these wars he made prisoner the chief among his adversaries, as well as a large portion of his army. He disarmed the latter, and leading his rival to the top of a hill in full view of his own and the defeated army, executed him with his own hand. That act consolidated the authority of Hoangti, and restored peace and tranquillity to the Empire. Having accomplished the first portion of his task, he devoted his attention in the next place to the reform of the internal administration. He divided his territory into ten provinces, or *Chow*, each of which was subdivided into ten departments, or *Tse*, and these again into ten districts, or *Tou*, each of which contained ten towns, or *Ye*. He re-arranged the weights and measures also on the decimal system, and the reforms attributed to him still form part of the existing order of things in China. It is un-

necessary to mention all the inventions with which this great monarch has been credited by his grateful countrymen. Prominent among them was the regulation of the calendar—the Chinese dividing the lapse of time into cycles of sixty years; and the first of these commences from a date that corresponds with the year 2637 before our era. One of his principal objects was the promotion of commerce, and, for that purpose, he constructed roads, and built vessels to navigate the great rivers and the open sea. His fame was spread throughout Asia, and embassies visited his court, whilst artificers and skilled workmen came from foreign lands to settle within his borders. The extent of the dominions of this ruler may be taken to have been from the vicinity of Shachow on the west to the sea on the east, and from Pechihli on the north to the river Kiang on the south. Regarded as the founder of a great Empire Hoangti appears, even at this interval of time, to have been worthy of the position which has been accorded him; and to his inspiration and example much of the subsequent greatness of China may be attributed. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand that Chinese annalists declare that no reign has been either more glorious or more auspicious than his, and that he was in every way worthy of the assumption of the imperial and semi-deified title of *Ti*,* or Emperor.

The sceptre of Hoangti passed to his son Chaohow,

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* Before his reign the sovereigns of China were called Wangs, or kings. The name of the King of Heaven, or God, was Changti, Supreme Emperor, or sovereign. Hoangti means the Yellow Emperor; but it henceforth became a usual title for the first ruler of a new dynasty to take.

who reigned long and peaceably, but who died without having acquired either glory or reputation. The one achievement of his life was the division of the officials and public administrators into classes, by means of distinctive dresses or uniforms—a task which, if not of the most distinguished, had its difficulties, and required a man of taste. On Chaohow's death his nephew Chwenhio became Emperor. He extended the Empire to the frontiers of Tonquin on the south and of Manchuria on the north, and earned "the glorious title of restorer or even founder of true astronomy."* His descendants continued to possess the imperial dignity, and his great-grandson Yao was a ruler of striking ability and considerable reputation. To him the Chinese still look back with veneration, and it is by comparison with his conduct that the native historians gauge the capacity of his successors. That this fame has not been undeservedly allotted may be inferred from the passage quoted in the footnote.† The most extraordinary occurrence of his reign was the overflowing of the Hoangho, which flooded a large extent of

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* Mailla's "Histoire," vol. i. p. 34.

† "If the closest attention is paid to the career of the Emperor Yao, this is what would be said of him:—The services which he rendered the Republic extend to all time, to all places, and to all persons. He was diligent, enlightened, polished and prudent, and these virtues were completely natural to him, and not an artificial growth. He was in the true sense respectful, and he knew on occasion how to be humble. The fame of his virtue filled the whole universe. He could give to rational nature all the brilliance of which she is susceptible, and this furnished him with the means of establishing reciprocal affection in his own family. After establishing concord within his family, he made equality and order supreme among his own people. The people of his own immediate dominions having been by his care and his example inculcated with

country and caused enormous damage.* The best years of Yao's life were spent in coping with this danger, and in repairing the mischief that had been wrought by it. In this he was only partially successful. His idea of his duty towards his subjects was based upon a high standard; and he always acted on the principle that what he wanted done well he should do himself. He is reported to have often said, "Are the people cold? then it is I who am the cause. Are they hungry? it is my fault. Do they commit any crime? I ought to consider myself the culprit." It is not very surprising to find that the people mourned for this ruler after his death during three years, and that they lamented his loss as "children do that of their father or mother."

Another great and wise ruler followed the Emperor Yao. His name was Chun, and for twenty-eight years previous to his accession he had been associated with the Emperor Yao in the administration of the state. Of comparatively humble origin Chun was the architect of his own fortunes. His zeal, assiduity and integrity in the public service caught the eye of the Emperor Yao, who had long been seeking a man capable of aiding him in the task of ruling the vast

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the light of true reason, union and concord spread throughout the whole Empire. What an admirable conversion he effected in the spirit of all his peoples! Thus under him perfect concord became general." Such is the brief but magnificent eulogium on Yao in the "Choukin."

* By some this was considered identical with the flood of Noah. Excellent reasons for disbelieving this assertion will be found on p. 41 of M. Pauthier's work, and also in "Mémoires sur les Chinois," par le P. Amiot (t. xiii. p. 282).

territories under his sway, and one worthy also of succeeding him in the supreme authority. Chun's excellent conduct in the offices entrusted to him pointed him out as the man for the occasion, and the result amply justified the selection. At first Chun wished Yao's son, Tanchu, to be chosen Emperor, and retired to his country residence to avoid the importunities of his admirers. But the notables of the realm saw that Chun was the fittest man for the office, and they refused to make the interests of the Empire subservient to the personal feelings of a family. Chun was proclaimed Emperor; but he also, feeling the weight of ruling so large a country more than one man could bear, selected Yu, the Minister of Public Works, to help him in the task. Yu became associated with Chun in the same manner that the latter had been with Yao; and the glory of the period when the nation was ruled by this triumvirate has been dwelt upon in fervid language by the Chinese historians. In many respects the patriarchal sway of those remote rulers represents the brightest and the most prosperous age in the whole history of the Empire.* It is

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* Much might be quoted to show that these rulers had the keenest sense of the difficulties and responsibilities of their position. Chun once said, "The post which I occupy is beyond contradiction the most difficult and dangerous of all. The happiness of the public depends on it, and if he who occupies the throne does not act with extreme wisdom, how many evils must ensue! However able an Emperor may be, he is only a man, and cannot by himself know everything." Yu gave expression to the following: "A prince entrusted with the charge of a State has a heavy task. The happiness of his subjects absolutely depends upon him. To provide for everything is his duty; his ministers are only put in office to assist him."

not surprising to find that the basis on which the authority of these Emperors rested was implicit obedience to the law. "A prince who wishes to fulfil his obligations, and to long preserve his people in the ways of peace, ought to watch without ceasing that the laws are observed with exactitude." That sentence forms the keynote of the policy of these rulers, and the wise princes who came after them have never hesitated to adopt it for themselves. When Chun died, in the year B.C. 2208, Yu, after some hesitation, allowed himself to be proclaimed Emperor. His reign was brief, as he ruled alone for no more than seven years. It may be stated that one of the last of his public acts was to denounce the inventor of an intoxicating drink* extracted from rice as an enemy to the state. With prophetic sight he exclaimed on tasting it, "Ah, how many evils this drink will, I foresee, cause China! Let the man who invented it be exiled beyond our frontier, and let him never be permitted to return." With Yu's death this prosperous period reached its close.† It is impossible to pass on from this period without quoting the following remarkable passage from the "Choukin," which gives an instructive lesson in the art of governing as taught in China in these early ages, and of which the essence has not after four thousand

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* Samshu, probably.

† Du Halde informs us that "the Chinese philosophers are in the habit of testing their maxims of morality by the degree of agreement they may have with the conduct of the Emperor Yao and his successors Chun and Yu; the agreement once proved gives to their maxims an authority against which there is no reply."

years wholly evaporated. "What Heaven hears and sees manifest themselves by the things which the people see and hear. What the people judge worthy of reward and what of punishment, indicate what Heaven wishes to punish and to reward. There is an intimate communication between Heaven and the people; let those who govern the people be watchful and cautious!" To this the comparatively modern *Vox populi, vox Dei* adds nothing.*

Up to this point the Empire had gone to its worthiest servant without distinction of birth, and Yu on his death-bed left the succession to the President of the Council who had been associated with himself in the task of government. But the times were changing. Whether it sprang from a feeling of gratitude to a public benefactor, or whether the sons resented losing the prize which the ability of their sires had secured, is not ascertained; but the fact is clear that on the death of Yu there was a decided revulsion in popular sentiment in favour of his son Tiki. Both the causes mentioned probably operated to produce this result, and the custom of selecting the ablest and most experienced minister was displaced by the son's right to hereditary succession. So it happened that Tiki, the son of Yu, was the founder of the first Chinese dynasty, known in history as the Hia dynasty from

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* See Pauthier, p. 42. At this period the administration was formed by nine Ministers of State, each at the head of a distinct department. They were President of the Council, Minister of Agriculture, of Education, of Justice, of Public Works, of the State Lands, of Ceremonies and Rites, of Music, and of Public Censure.

the name of the province over which Yu had first been placed. There were in all seventeen Emperors of the Hia dynasty, and their rule continued down to the year B.C. 1776. It is unnecessary to dwell on the events of these four centuries. The descendants of Yu who owed their reputation to his splendid achievements, became in the course of time tyrants and seekers of pleasure. Their palaces were the scenes of debaucheries carried out on a scale equalling those of either Nero or Vitellius. They themselves became the object of the hatred, instead of the love of their subjects. The great feudatories and the public officers combined against Kia, the last of the Emperors of this family, and at their head they placed Ching Tang, the prince of Chang.

This chief was the founder of the second dynasty, called after the name of his principality the Chang. Twenty-eight emperors of this House succeeded one another, and it remained in possession of the Imperial throne until the year B.C. 1122. Ching Tang was worthy of being the founder of a dynasty. In his wars with the Hias, whom he expelled the kingdom, he showed not less skill than moderation; and his subsequent conduct amply justified the choice which had made him the leader of the popular movement. His reign was marked by a great dearth, which either his prayers or his measures at length removed.* He appears to have had, like our Cromwell, many

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* It is curious that the date of this famine closely coincides with that in Egypt in the days of Pharaoh and Joseph.

doubts and qualms of conscience as to whether he had acted as became a good and wise prince as well as a dutiful subject in deposing the Hias, and declared that it was "in spite of himself that he had taken up arms to deliver the Empire from the tyranny of Kia." One of the mottoes he adopted was, "In order to make yourself perfect, purify yourself every day, renew yourself every day," meaning thereby to convey the grand truth learnt by so few, that each day should find us purified and free from the trammels of yesterday, except in so far as the experience of the past may be valuable. He had the personal satisfaction of leaving to his grandson, Taikia, the possessions which he had wrested from the Hias, and, although not placed on the same footing as the three great Emperors who immediately preceded the establishment of the first dynasty, Confucius speaks of him in terms of respect. Among his successors Taivou, who commenced to reign in the year B.C. 1637, may be mentioned as receiving numerous embassies from the states lying beyond his western border. These are stated to have numbered seventy-six, and some writers have striven to prove that the arrival of so many envoys at the same moment may be taken as showing that there must have been some great disturbance in Western Asia. Chinese history is invoked to confirm the truth of the reported invasion of India by Sesostris about this time. It is to be feared that the Court language of the Chinese has misled several historians* on this point,

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* Pauthier's "La Chine," p. 67 and note.

as the seventy-six embassies probably came not from "kingdoms" or "states," but from petty districts and clans in the countries which are now known to us as Kokonor, Tibet and Burma.

In the reign of Pankeng (B.C. 1401–1374) the vagaries of the Hoangho led to two changes in the place of the capital or court residence, and on one occasion a site was selected near the modern Pekin. Pankeng was almost the last of the virtuous kings of the Chang dynasty. Some of his precepts, preserved in the "Choukin," are admirable, and might be perused with profit at the present day. After Pankeng came a long line of princes weak in their mind and dissolute in their habits, and the courtiers imitated only too perfectly the examples of their masters. The story is told that Vouting, the one exception to this rule, was compelled to have recourse to an ordinary labourer as the only honest man he could discover for the dignified office of his chief minister.* The name of this minister was Fou-yue, and he seems to have made it his object to emulate the praiseworthy conduct of the earlier rulers and ministers of China. With the death of these two men the Chang dynasty produced no other ruler, and the nation no other minister capable of maintaining the ruling House on the throne. In the twelfth century the crimes of the Emperors reached their culminating point in the person of Chousin, and the

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* See "Histoire Générale," par P. Mailla, vol. i. pp. 213–15. The Chinese annals put this in a more picturesque dress.

punishment of Providence was at last meted out by one of the great nobles, Wou Wang,* prince of Chow. Wou Wang crossed the Hoangho at the head of a large army and routed the forces of Chousin on the plain of Mouye in Honan. The Emperor retired to his palace where he committed suicide, and the Chang dynasty expired with him.†

The accession of Wou Wang as the first ruler of the third dynasty was followed by those reforms in the administration which the crimes and apathy of the Changs had rendered absolutely necessary. His acts as Emperor were marked by vigour and moderation; and the confidence of the nation was soon enlisted in favour of the new family. The general satisfaction was enhanced in its effect by the obstinacy of two ministers of the Emperor Chousin, who sooner than eat the bread of the usurper starved themselves to death.

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* Wou Wang means "the Warrior King."

† What could be finer than the following exordium on the crimes and approaching fall of the Changs spoken by Weitsen, brother of the Emperor Chousin? "Great dignitaries! Lower dignitaries! The Yu (Chang) dynasty is no longer capable of governing the four quarters (that is, the Empire). The great actions of our founder have enjoyed—and, indeed, still possess—a wide renown. But we who have come after him have, by giving ourselves up to the excesses of wine, degenerated from that high virtue! All the members and followers of this dynasty, great and small alike, have given themselves over to vice; they are thieves, debauchees and generally wicked. The principal and the minor officials, encouraging each other with their mutual examples, commit all kinds of crimes. Evil-doers receive no punishment, and the people are incited to commit evil deeds by impunity. Our dynasty is undoubtedly on the verge of shipwreck. It is like unto a man trying to cross a wide river and unable to gain the bank. Its destruction is close at hand."—"Choukin," b. 3, chap. ii. As M. Pauthier very truly remarks, "Where shall we find the funeral chant of a dynasty as magestic as this?"

Wou Wang publicly expressed his admiration of their fidelity and his regret at their death. Similar acts of magnanimity are frequently recorded of Chinese rulers, and were always rewarded by an increase of reputation in their people's opinion. Wou Wang's instincts were those of a soldier, and the simple habits which he introduced into the life of the Court led to the bringing of fresh vigour into the national existence. His immediate successors followed his prudent example, and thus the Chow dynasty grew firmly established on the throne. He received various embassies, notably one from Kitse, king of Corea, who came in person to congratulate the new Emperor, thus commencing the connection between China and Corea which still subsists. His son Ching Wang was, during the first few years of his reign, obliged to carry on military operations against several of his relations; but these speedily terminating in his favour, left him strong both within and without his frontier. Mention is made of an embassy arriving from a country which can only be identified with Siam, and the reason given for its despatch was that it had been visited by several years of unusual prosperity, which the seers declared to be due to the throne of China being occupied by a wise prince.*

One of the ablest of the Chow rulers was Mou Wang, or "the magnificent king," son of a prince named Chao Wang who had been drowned in the river Han,

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* The delicacy of the compliment will be apparent. The name of the country was "Yuechangchi, south of Cochin China." "Hist. Gen." vol. i. p. 316.

through the treachery of some of his subjects. Mou Wang ascended the throne about the year B.C. 1000, and continued to rule until B.C. 952. Waging several wars beyond the limits of China Proper, he inflicted severe defeats upon the wild tribes whose country was held in later days by the Mongols. Nor were his journeys beyond the frontier confined to warlike expeditions. On one occasion he made a peaceful tour to the west of his possessions into Tibet, reaching a point in the vicinity of the Kuenlun mountains.* This simple fact has given rise to exaggerated rumours as to his having travelled as far west as Persia or Syria. In those remote ages the western world of China was of much more limited extent than to include those distant countries. Still there remains the fact that this Emperor undertook a memorable journey in unknown regions beyond his frontier. He was also widely famed as a builder of palaces and other public works. In one year he erected a summer palace, and in another he laid out a fortress. China has never been famed for its horses, and before the importation of the hardy steeds of Mongolia and Manchuria they were scarcely to be found out of the royal stables. One of the early Emperors speaks of horses and dogs as "animals foreign to China," and the chronicles tell us of the eight proud coursers which Mou Wang sent to "an isle in the Eastern Sea" to be nourished. Fed on "dragon grass," we are informed that they became capable of performing

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* Possibly Khoten, then a city of some fame.

a journey of one thousand li in the course of a single day. The remaining events of this reign are comprised under the head of "wars with the barbarians."

Mou Wang's successors continued to reign, much after the same fashion, without any event calling for notice, until the time of Li Wang, B.C. 873, who is described as "a prince not wanting in ability, but whose insufferable pride, suspicious nature and cruelty absolutely effaced the good qualities which he would otherwise have possessed." This prince soon forfeited the affections of his subjects, and his senseless tyranny called down upon him the vengeance of popular indignation. There was no dynastic crisis such as had taken place in the time of the Changs, for it was plain to the common intelligence that the crimes committed were those of an individual and not of a family. The nation rose up and exposed the criminality of Li Wang, and the poets* gave forcible expression to the nation's mind. There was neither occasion nor inducement for a heaven-sent champion to appear in the arena. The constitutional methods ready to the hand sufficed to curb the wrong-doing sovereign, and they were employed with efficacy and address. Li Wang was driven from the throne and compelled to flee the country. He survived his fall fourteen years, but time secured no oblivion for his faults in the eyes of the people. In that sense the nation proved as inexorable as the laws of the Empire. Li Wang died in

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* See Pauthier, pp. 101–3, for a very fine specimen of their writings, which is a magnificent outburst of eloquence as well as a terrible indictment.

exile, and during his absence China was governed by a regency composed of two ministers. When Li Wang died the regents proclaimed his son, Siouen Wang, Emperor, thus giving a fresh lease of life to the Chow dynasty. Brilliant victories over the barbarians, who had grown more daring in their encroachments, marked the beginning of his reign; but something of the effect of this successful defence of the Empire was removed by a great blight which visited the country. The blame for this national calamity was laid at the door of the sovereign, because he had neglected to perform in person a ceremony the origin of which was traced back to the ancient days of Chinese annals, and the penalty of such neglect was pronounced by the highest authority to be "the wrath of the Master of all things (Changti) and desolation throughout the Empire." What the famine began the valour of the barbarians completed. Siouen Wang's army was routed on the field of battle, and although ultimately retrieving his lost fortune he never completely recovered the popularity which had accompanied his earlier years, when he was in every respect "a much beloved king."

His son Yeou Wang was heir not only to his throne, but also to his misfortunes. Floods, earthquakes and other calamities struck terror to the heart of the people; the ruler alone proved callous to them. While his subjects were daily raising loud complaints to the throne he passed his time in idle pleasures in his palace. The general distress made the reduction of taxation a matter of ordinary prudence; he doubled

the imposts to gratify the wishes of his mistress. The Chinese have never been silent under tyranny. They have sometimes, but rarely, produced a Brutus, or a Harmodius; but they have never failed to find satirists whose bitter words have exposed the shortcomings of the Emperor, even though endowed in the common parlance with many of the attributes of God. Yeou Wang became the butt of the learned, his crimes were denounced in the Tribunal of History, and his amours formed the theme of daily conversation. "The Royal House was approaching its fall," wrote the great historian of the day. Meanwhile the heir apparent had fled the palace, and sought with his mother refuge among the Tartar tribes of the West. These wild people looked upon the cities of China as their lawful prey, and though often beaten back with loss it cost them little or nothing to resume an enterprise that might result in the attainment of a great prize. Never did the prospect appear more seductive to them than during the years when Yeou Wang's conduct had alienated his people, and the dynasty of Chow seemed tottering on the verge of ruin. The Tartars poured over the frontier ravaging the country as they advanced, and Yeou Wang marched with several armies to oppose them. The victory should have gone to him, but the column under his command was attacked and overwhelmed by numbers, Yeou Wang himself perishing on the field.

His son Ping Wang was then placed upon the throne by the great vassal princes, but the danger from the Tartars, elated by their success over his father, con-

tinued to be so great that the Chinese were kept in a state of constant alarm. Ping Wang had to resort to the dangerous expedient of making one of the great nobles the custodian of his frontier. He abandoned his Western capital to this noble, Siangkong, Prince of Tsin, and retired to the Eastern capital, named Loyang, in Honan. The task entrusted to the prince named was difficult, but it enabled him to consolidate a power within the state independent of that of the Emperor. "The Tartars," said Ping Wang in his decree to the prince, "are constantly making their inroads into my provinces of Ki and Fong. You alone can put a stop to their onslaughts and marauding. Take then all this country, I yield it to you willingly, on the simple condition that you turn it into a barrier against them." In this decree, as engraved on a vase in Shensi, Ping Wang styled himself "the King of Heaven." Little did he think when doing so that the descendants of the Prince of Tsin would drive his in ignominy from the throne. Centuries were to pass away before the fall came, but the abnegation of the Imperial duty of defending the frontier could only lead, sooner or later, to the loss of Imperial power and station.

The other great vassals were not slow to follow the example set them by the powerful Prince of Tsin. If Siangkong was the only one to assume regal honours,* his peers were not backward in claiming the

* Siangkong caused a stone tortoise to be made, and offered sacrifice to Changti upon it, a right which had previously belonged to the Emperor alone.

substance of supreme authority in their own territories. During Ping Wang's reign, it was said, "the ancient religion perished, the sciences, learning, zeal for the public good were cast aside; and men of talent having lost their career scattered themselves over the face of the country." The public mind was so much disturbed by the disunion in the Empire, and the incompetence of the prince, that it saw in the most trifling circumstances fresh evidence of the imminent ruin of the dynasty. The "Chiking"*—that wonderful collection of national ballads—is full of the complaints that rose at this time from the midst of the people to the foot of the throne; and one high official reported as a momentous fact that "the ancestral burial place of the House of Chow was in ruins, and that only a few sad relics remained as evidence of its having existed!" Ping Wang died, in B.C. 720, after a reign of more than fifty years. Between that time and the year B.C. 606, seven Emperors of the dynasty of Chow succeeded each other. Their names were Hing Wang, Chang Wang, Li Wang, Hoei Wang, Siang Wang, King Wang and Kwang Wang. A few years after the death of the last-named ruler, Laoutse, the first religious and social reformer was born. With him commenced a new era in the history of China. The period of one hundred and twenty years thus covered was taken up with innumerable petty wars between the principal vassals of the crown. The Tartars of the West and of the North afforded per-

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* See Dr. Legge's translation of this collection. Sheking, 1876.

manent occupation for those on the frontier, and although the Chinese triumphed by dint of numbers and superior skill they never ventured to wage more than a defensive war. The seven Emperors succeeded in maintaining their position in Honan, and for a short distance in the surrounding region on account of the prevailing dissension; but their authority was but a faint semblance of what it once had been, and still claimed to be. Like the later Cæsars the less able they became to wield the sword against the enemy, and to resist the arrogance of the proud, the closer they wrapt the purple round them, and sought in the pleasures of the palace to forget the duties and privileges of the council chamber. So far as the record of notable events or the exercise of Imperial power is concerned the annals of the Chow rulers might be already closed; but the ability and virtues of Laoutse, and the genius of Confucius gave a lustre to the last three centuries of their rule not unworthy of its earlier fame.

Before passing on to the consideration of the important epoch which we have now reached, and which forms the commencement of the regular history of China, it will be advisable to glance back for a moment at the vast space of time which has been traversed in the few preceding pages.* Originally a

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* This is the more necessary as the antiquity of Chinese history has been challenged by several writers. There can be no question of its substantial accuracy from the time of Confucius, but that is *only* two thousand four hundred years ago. The balance of evidence is wholly in favour of the account given in these pages, but the remarks of so intelligent a critic as M. de Guignes may here

nomad people, following the free and untrammelled existence of the hunter and the shepherd, the necessities produced by increasing numbers compelled the Chinese to become agriculturists, and to settle in towns. They had their mythical ancestors, in common with the rest of mankind, who taught them the use of fire and of clothes, and who raised them gradually from the brute life which they were leading into a higher and a nobler one. Then appeared the first conqueror Hoangti, to be followed by those three perfect, and probably ideal Emperors, Yao, Chun and Yu, who left an example that none of their successors could hope to emulate. With the death of Yu the first stage in Chinese history closes. The principle that the ruler of the country should be the very best and ablest man in the community, carried out during four brilliant reigns, was set aside partly by the national sense of gratitude, partly because the progress of the age had led to personal ambition vanquishing the purely public spirit of the patriarchal rulers. The death of Yu was followed by the

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be inserted and studied with profit. It is permissible to believe that his critical faculty has proved too strong for his judgment of facts. "One of the causes which have led the Chinese into great errors with regard to the antiquity of their country is that they have given to the ancient characters the meaning which they acquired in much more recent times. The characters now translated by the words *emperor*, *province*, *city* and *palace* meant no more in former times than chief of tribe, district, camp and house. These simple meanings did not flatter their vanity sufficiently, and they therefore preferred employing terms which would represent their ancestors as rich and powerful, and their Empire as vast and flourishing in a durable manner before the year B.C. 529." It need only be added that such weakness as this would not be peculiar to the Chinese.

establishment of the first dynasty in the person of his son. After six centuries that dynasty was destroyed, to be succeeded by a second, which, when it had ruled for four centuries, was displaced by a third, still reigning at the moment we close this chapter.

With the establishment of a distinct line of succession the country expanded its limits and assumed all the proportions of an Empire. Its existence was acknowledged by the surrounding nations. It became an object of terror or of solicitude to its neighbours. Foreign embassies flocked to the capital; the princes of the desert, the rulers of the Jongs of the Amour, the kings of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, admitted that the countenance of the great Ti was the light which illumined Eastern Asia. And then, as all things human decline and fall—if they even arise with renewed strength like Antæus—there came a long period of decadence. Prince succeeded prince only to find the extent of his territory more limited, of his authority more circumscribed. The weakness of one ruler had led to the transfer of supreme power from the hands of the sovereign to those of the nobles, already too formidable, and it was not until the ranks of the nobles produced a man, in the third century before our era, capable of subduing his peers that the Emperor reacquired the old supremacy, which had belonged to him in days that may well be styled prehistoric. It was at this period that the feudal system was in most vigorous condition, although under the later dynasties it was to show greater and more remarkable energy. This system had at least in its

favour that the nobles were of the same race as the people of the soil, and that in their provincial capitals they set themselves to imitate not the vices and folly of the ruling Emperor, but the wisdom and irreproachable conduct of those earlier and wise princes who are held up as the pattern of every kingly virtue. By these means China, though under the sway of tyrants and incapable princes during the last five hundred years of the Chow dynasty, was well governed on the whole and the people remained fairly contented. To this circumstance the ruling House undoubtedly owed its preservation. It had become contemptible in the eyes of the nation, but contempt is not hatred, and it was suffered to maintain a station which, by its own act, had been deprived of practical significance. Not until personal ambition was called into play, and the overthrow of the Emperor had become the special desire and object of a single noble, did the Chows receive the blow which destroyed them. It is the one instance in Chinese history of a dynasty surviving by several centuries the period of its utility—a proof, in its way, of the fact that the grandeur of the Empire as a fixed unit has been created since that time.*

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* Something may be said here of the origin of the name of China, which is at present wrapt in some doubt. It is probable that the root whence this name came is lost in a very remote antiquity, although the Chinese themselves are unaware of it, and apparently puzzled at the name being applied to their country, which they speak of by the title of the reigning family. It may be possible that the Sinim of Isaiah was identical with China; but "in the laws of Manu and in the Mahabaratha" the country of Chinas or Shinas bears a closer resemblance, and it has been pointed out that they were probably a tribe in the country west of Cashmere,

now known as Dardistan. The Latins spoke of the people of a far eastern country—the most remote in the world, and consequently beyond the India of Alexander—as Seres Sinenses, rich in silk and gold, and great traders. Later philologists have traced the name back to the Tsins (Tsina, Tchin, Tchina, China), and many other curious explanations have been given of its origin. In fact, every writer has had a theory to ventilate, and the reader may be referred to the works already quoted, and especially to the admirable article on China from the pen of Professor R. K. Douglas in the ninth edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica." Col. Yule, in a note on p. 210 of vol. ii. of "Marco Polo," says, "We get the exact form 'China'—which is also used in Japanese—from the Malay." This ought to be decisive, and remove all necessity for further speculation. The fact may be noted that whereas this vast Empire became known as China to those who approached it by sea or derived their information by intercourse from the south, Cathay, or Khitay (the Russian name), was the name given by those coming overland from the north.

CHAPTER II.

THE DECLINE OF THE CHOW DYNASTY.*

Religion of China.—Its Moral Code.—Laoutse.—His Teaching.—Confucius.—His Career and Death.—Resumption of Narrative of Historical Affairs.—War with Tartars.—A New Kingdom.—Ling Wang.—A Ruler better than his Age.—His Successors.—Extinction of Two Independent States.—The Question of Supremacy.

The earliest religion of the Chinese consisted in the worship of a Supreme Being, who was the sovereign both of the heavens and of the earth. The people recognised with shrewd practical judgment that the power which could not be divided on earth without suffering in extent could not be divided in a sphere of assumed perfection.† It may be doubted whether

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* As it would be beside the object of this history to enter into the details of the life and work of Confucius and Laoutse, it may be advisable to give here the names of the works that throw most light on the subject. They are "The Works of Confucius," by Dr. Marshman. Serampore, 1833; "Confucianism and Taouism," by Professor Douglas. London, 1879; "Religions of China," by Dr. Legge. London, 1880; and "Chinese Buddhism," by Dr. Edkin. London, 1880.

† "There are not two supreme lords," says the "Liki." Much might be quoted to show the idea of the early Chinese of their Ti, or Supreme Being; but, in brief, he may be said to have been the Jehovah of the Jews as represented by their earliest writers.

any nation possessed and described, with anything approaching the same degree of beautiful conception, the idea of that moral and spiritual pre-eminence which among all the peoples of the world has taken form in the creation of a great and supreme God. Originally, and in its essence, the religion of the Chinese was as far removed from materialism as can be conceived. The great moral teaching of Christianity had been learnt and taken to heart at least seven centuries before the birth of Christ, and among the traditions of the Chinese, in the days of the great philosophers, were that "God ultimately rewards the good, and punishes the wicked; but his punishment is awarded without hatred and without anger," and that "however wicked a man may be, if he repent of his sins he may offer sacrifices."* China, like Rome, was hospitable to all the gods, and when foreign nations came, as recorded in the chronicles, they brought with them their rites, if not a distinct religion. It is impossible to estimate how much or how little influence exterior considerations exercised on the religious life of the Chinese, but we know by the experience of the history of the human race that a religion composed solely of the worship of a single Supreme Being has never sufficed to meet the wants of a people. The cult has in every case been extended so as to include a mediator, or to permit of an elaborate ritual being grafted on what were the simple and original impressions of the earliest of mankind. China

* That is to say, "he will be forgiven." To these teachings Christianity could add little.

could be no exception to the rule, and when the great philosophers of the sixth century appeared the grand truths of the single-minded worship of the Chinese had lost their efficacy, and the nation was plunged in a condition of moral indifference which was on a par with the prevailing corruption among the officials, and with the decline in the authority and power of the king.

The appearance of Laoutse, the first and perhaps the greatest of the Chinese philosophers, was therefore doubly opportune; of him it may be said that the times produced the man, although his individuality has been most difficult to grasp. In fact some have doubted his existence, and believed that many of the most cherished of the objects of the Chinese rested upon a myth. A brief sketch of his career may best serve to explain the ambiguity as to his existence, and to throw light on the achievements of the great reformer. Laoutse was born in the year B.C. 604, of humble parents. A village in the province of Honan is identified with the place where he was born, which bore the doubtless apocryphal name of Keuhjin, or "oppressed benevolence." Of his youth and early manhood we know nothing more than that he obtained a small official post in one of the departments of the province of Chow. The probability is that this was the Department of the Archives, of which, in the course of time, he became the chief keeper. When he was at the advanced age of more than one hundred years he was visited by Confucius, but the interview was not of a satisfactory character.

Confucius, full of the wrongs of his country, importuned the aged philosopher with his description of the remedies for prevailing evils, and something in his impetuosity, and the very sanguineness of his expectations chafed the old man's spirit. In his concluding address, which was the reverse of complimentary to Confucius, he said, "Put away, sir, your haughty airs and many desires, your flashy manner and extravagant will; these are all unprofitable to you." In this it is easy to discern the disappointment of one who had aspired to be the founder of a new state religion, and who saw in the ambitious Confucius a rival, and one likely to prove more successful than himself.*

Shortly after this interview, Laoutse resigned his office, and led a life of retirement, giving himself up to "the cultivation of Taou and Virtue." The disorders in the state compelled him to seek a safer abode, and he accordingly left Chow by the Hankoo pass, for the western countries. To the guardian of this pass he gave a book containing five thousand characters which represented the meditations of his life. This book was called the Taoutihking, and is the Bible of Taouism. After this act Laoutse con-

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* Confucius's opinion of Laoutse is recorded in the following sentence. "I know how birds can fly, how fishes can swim and how beasts can run. The runner, however, may be snared, the swimmer may be hooked and the flyer may be shot with an arrow. But there is the dragon; I cannot tell how he mounts on the wind through the clouds and rises to heaven. To-day I have seen Laoutse, and can only compare him to the dragon." Confucius meant thereby to convey the impression that Laoutse was unpractical and purely speculative in his aspirations.

tinued his journey and disappeared from history. We are told that thenceforth all trace of him was lost, but according to one version he announced his intention of visiting and returning from India, Cabul, Rome, and other kingdoms of the West. Of the exact significance of his teaching it is difficult to speak with any degree of confidence, for, as M. de Remusat said in his Memoir on Laoutse, "the text is so full of obscurity, we have so few means of acquiring a perfect understanding of it, so little knowledge of the circumstances to which the author makes allusion, we are in a word so distant in all respects from the ideas under the influence of which he wrote, that it would be temerity to pretend to reproduce exactly the sense which he had in view, when that sense is beyond our grasp." Laoutse's great object was to define the method of attaining true virtue and religion. Taou, which has been defined as meaning "reason" and other significations, was simply the "way;"* and Laoutse, in explaining what in his eyes Taou was, rejected the old beliefs and trusted solely to his own inspiration. His work was therefore entirely original, and the writer quoted compares him to Pythagoras. Three centuries after his disappearance there was what may be called a revival of Taouism, under the short-lived dynasty of the Tsins, and the precepts of the philosopher have become grafted in the national religion, of which it has been truly and graphically

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* See page 189 of Professor Douglas's essay on "Confucianism and Taouism."

said by a French writer* that it is "practically one religion, of which the doctrine belongs to Confucius, the objects of the cult to Laoutse, and the precepts to Buddha."

The example set by Laoutse was carried out in a still more striking and successful manner by Confucius, whose veneration for the past gave him greater claims upon the goodwill of his countrymen than the strict moral and logical rectitude of the Chinese iconoclast. Devoting himself to the study and observance of the ancient rites, his earnestness, combined with simple eloquence, gathered round him a band of disciples, whose numbers steadily increased with the course of years. But the times were unfavourable for men of peace. The reigning princes were at feud with each other and defiant towards their liege lord; and the petty barons and chiefs in their turn paid but scant attention to the behests of their suzerains. The Duke of Loo was compelled by three turbulent vassals to flee from his estates, and with him went Confucius, who held a small post at his court. On the road we are told of the following incident which afforded the philosopher the opportunity of giving expression to a forcible comment on the condition of the country. A woman was found sitting beside the highway weeping, and on being asked the cause of her grief, replied that a tiger had slain her husband, father-in-law, and lastly her son. "Why then do you not remove to another place?" "Because," she replied, "here there

* Count D'Escayrac de Lauture.

is no oppressive government." The philosopher's comment was to the point. "My children, remember this, oppressive government is fiercer than a tiger." At the court of the Duke of Tse, Confucius was accorded an honourable reception, but this proved of short duration because he incurred the enmity of the chief minister, who soon turned his master against the new-comer. The Duke brought matters to a conclusion by declaring that he was too old to adopt the doctrines of the philosopher.

Of the later career of Confucius at the courts of Loo, Ting, and other nobles, it is unnecessary to say anything here. Both his teachings and his literary labours exercised little influence on contemporary affairs. A later generation had to come before either were appreciated at their just value. The very basis of his philosophy rested on the respect due from the subject to the Emperor, as the representative of the wisdom of the ancients, and this was extremely distasteful to great personages living in open indifference to that authority, and secretly desirous of substituting their own in its place. Confucius became, therefore, a wanderer from one court to another ; and while he preached an ideal government the rulers of the land were engaged in the pursuit of their own pleasure, regardless alike of the national welfare and of the dictates of the morality which Laoutse and Confucius had expressed for them with all the force of intellect, the one as a moral obligation, the other as an article of faith and obedience. Confucius strove repeatedly to induce some of the reigning princes to entrust him

with responsible posts in their administrations, and on several occasions he succeeded in obtaining his wish. But it was never for any length of time. He always became the object of the hostility of the courtiers, and his fall generally happened very soon after his rise to power. At last Confucius began to despair of success in finding a ruler after his own heart; and discouraged by years of disappointment it was with a presentiment of the coming end that he said, "No intelligent monarch arises, there is not one in the Empire who will make me his master. My time is come to die." That very day the event happened which he had foreseen. Such was the end of the career of Confucius, who, if enthusiastic in his advocacy of a model of government that was probably antiquated, was at least earnest in his desire to promote the interests of his country. His example lived after him, and bore better fruit at a later period than it had borne at any time during his life.*

The reign of Kwang Wang closed in B.C. 606, and his brother Ting Wang became Emperor in his place. At this time a contemporary writer exclaimed that, although the dynasty of the Chows had lost much of its ancient lustre, Heaven had not yet rejected it; but even the court chroniclers were constrained to admit that the events happening in the provinces were of greater interest than those occurring at the capital. Ting Wang desired to assert his authority more

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* The reader should certainly peruse Dr. Legge's "Religions of China," and Professor Douglas's "Confucianism," as it is impossible to narrate here the details of the careers of Confucius and Laoutse.

vigorously than had been done by any of his immediate predecessors, and commissioned one of his ministers, Prince Chantse, to visit the capitals of the great nobles and to report to him on the manner in which the feudatories governed their states. The object was laudable, but, destitute of the means to carry any reforms into execution, the Emperor had really sent Chantse on a fool's errand. Two of the chiefs received him with a decent show of honour for his master, and of respect for his mission; but Lingkong, the powerful prince of Chin, refused to assume the semblance of sentiments he did not feel. Instead of proceeding to the frontier, as etiquette required, to meet the delegate of the Emperor, Lingkong remained in his capital. Neither guard of honour nor royal lodging was provided for Chantse, who was left to find his way as best he could to the presence of this indifferent potentate. Chantse on his return reported these things to Ting Wang and recommended vigorous action; but the latter, naturally of a peaceful disposition, was doubly inclined to peace by the want of power. He concealed whatever resentment he felt; and rather than provoke a contest acquiesced in the insult to his person, and the scarcely veiled repudiation of his authority. This conduct may have borne testimony to the goodness of his heart, but it reflected little credit on his character as a ruler, and in the end this abnegation of the privileges and rights of power led to the ruin of his family.

One act alone gave Ting Wang's reign the semblance of being over a united country, and that was a

war with the Tartars of the desert. For this purpose he either concluded an alliance or came to a temporary understanding with the Prince of Tsin, himself engaged in an incessant border struggle with these tribes. A small army, sent by the Emperor, co-operated with the local forces. The Prince of Tsin thought the proper solution of the difficulty was to utilise this military demonstration for the conclusion of an advantageous peace; but to Ting Wang's general, Lieoukangkong, the occasion appeared too favourable to be neglected for obtaining a cheap renown. He refused to follow the sensible advice of his ally, and commenced active hostilities against the Tartars. Inexperienced in the mode of warfare necessary for coping successfully with their irregular forces, Lieoukangkong was defeated with heavy loss, and it would have gone hard with the Imperial army but for the timely succour of the Prince of Tsin and the local levies. This disaster dispelled whatever hopes had been indulged of a permanent peace, and the state of affairs on the extreme frontier resumed its normal condition of an armed truce. The remaining years of Ting Wang's reign were peaceful, and his son Kien Wang succeeded him without opposition (B.C. 585).

Like his father, Kien Wang was inclined to peace, and left his vassals to follow their own will both in the administration of their territories and also in the settlement of the difficulties which frequently arose amongst them. In his eyes the sole duty remaining to the Emperor had become the setting of an example which the misfortunes of his family left him incapable

of enforcing. He has been awarded the credit of bearing the weight of the crown with the appearance of dignity which titularly it required. What energy there was left to this scion of an ancient race might have been devoted with profit to practical politics, but it was directed instead to the settlement of domestic questions, and to the exposure or the persecution of two religious schismatics.

At this period China did not extend beyond the great river Yangtsekiang. The region of the barbarians* included all the provinces lying south of that stream. Several centuries before this period an adventurous Chinese prince had penetrated into this country, and founded in the eastern portion of the province of Kiangnan a kingdom known by the name of Wou. It was not for many years afterwards that this independent state was brought into contact with the rest of the Empire, and then only because a disappointed Chinese noble, Ouchin, took refuge there. Ouchin trained the native soldiers on the Chinese principle, and then inflamed the mind of the king by stories of the weakness of his neighbours. The king turned a ready ear to the promptings of his new counsellor. A campaign ensued with the Prince of Chow, and concluded with the conquest of several districts by the Wou army. The general condition

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* The Chinese applied a character, which is generally rendered by our term "barbarian," to all peoples and nations not under the rule of their Emperor. It is doubtful, however, whether the phrase has any greater meaning than "those who live outside, or beyond." We preserve here a term with the meaning of which the examples of Greece and Rome have made us familiar.

of the country corresponded with this incident, and verged on a state of anarchy. One conflict between the princes assumed all the proportions of a great war.

On the death of Kien Wang (B.C. 571) his son Ling Wang succeeded him; and one of the first events of his reign was a campaign entered upon by the Chow ruler for the reconquest from Wou of the territory he had lost. In this he failed with disaster. Several leagues between the great vassals were then formed for the purpose of restoring tranquillity to the Empire, but the laudable object sufficed only to make the prevailing disunion more palpable. The Prince of Wou was on one of these occasions formally admitted to be a member of the Empire. Under the auspices of the Emperor a general pacification of the realm was agreed to by more than twelve of the great princes; but the hostility, ambition, and indifference of the few who remained recalcitrant more than sufficed to disturb the harmony of the arrangement. The Prince of Wou was the next breaker of the national peace; but while examining a fort to which he was laying siege during the invasion of a neighbour's territory, he met with his death from the hand of a skilful archer. Soon afterwards (B.C. 545) the Emperor himself died, leaving behind him the remembrance of a man whose amiability of character and private virtues had done much towards retarding the fall, if not towards re-establishing the fortunes, of his dynasty. In the words of his own historian the epitaph might be inscribed on his monument, "His good qualities merited a happier day."

His son, King Wang the Second, succeeded him as ruler. If he had followed in the footsteps of his sire he might have had the satisfaction of winning back to their allegiance some of the rebellious vassals whose hearts had been touched by Ling Wang's virtuous life. But King Wang wished to follow his own inclination, unfettered by the sense of having to play a consistent part in the eyes of the world. He neglected the small quantity of official work which he was still required to perform, and shutting himself up midst the pleasures of the palace never thought to glance abroad in order to learn what was happening among his neighbours, to whom he was by his position an object of dislike and envy the instant he ceased to be protected by their fears and respect. The feuds among his nominal subjects continued to rage with unabated fury, and the chronic warfare in the country produced a corresponding thirst for blood among the aspirants to authority in the different principalities. Assassinations, intrigues, and revolutions became the order of the day; and, if the capital of the country enjoyed an exceptional tranquillity, it was because the tyranny was more complete, and also because there was less to tempt the envy of the ambitious. King Wang's reign closed after eighteen years without any event having happened to give it either interest or importance. His death proved the signal for further disturbances, which seemed likely to produce a general war; but fortunately one faction proved more powerful than its rival, and King Wang the Third succeeded his brother of the same name.

Confucius flourished during the long reign of this Emperor, and whenever entrusted with office succeeded in introducing good order and a spirit of impartial justice among his fellows. But, as we have before said, these gleams of a happier time were of but brief duration. The elements were too unfavourable even for Confucius; how much more so were they for weaker men! The second prince of the Wou family, whose power had been steadily increasing during the last half century, was worsted with heavy loss in a war with another potentate, and lost his life in battle. Two minor dynasties—those of Tsao and Chin—were extinguished during this reign, and their states seized by more powerful neighbours, thus affording the first proof of the inevitable termination of these internecine wars. It only remained for time to show which of the feudatories was to become sufficiently strong to absorb his neighbours and depose the ruling House.

CHAPTER III.

THE FALL OF THE CHOW DYNASTY.*

The New Ruler.—Yuen Wang.—A Student of Confucius.—The Internal Wars.—Taipe.—Kowtsin.—Ching Ting Wang.—Kao Wang.—The Warlike Epoch.—The Nine Vases.—Ouki.—A Hero.—Li Wang.—Hien Wang.—The Prince of Tsin.—His Power.—Tsi.—Mencius.—The Advocate of Virtue.—Soutsin.—Chow Siang Wang.—Fall of Chows.

When Confucius was on his deathbed, in the year B.C. 478, the reign of King Wang, the third of the name, was drawing to a close. For forty years he had striven to avert the collapse that threatened the dynasty, and to retain in his hands some portion of the authority of his ancestors. To a certain extent his object had been attained, the evil day had been staved off, and his son Yuen began his reign under fairer auspices than attended his father's assumption

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* The names of these later Emperors of the Chow dynasty, with their dates of accession, were as follows:—Yuen Wang, B.C. 475; Ching Ting Wang, B.C. 468; Kao Wang, B.C. 440; Weili Wang, B.C. 425; Gan Wang, B.C. 401; Li Wang, B.C. 375; Hien Wang, B.C. 368; Chin Tsin Wang, B.C. 320; Nan Wang, B.C. 314; and Chow Keen, last of the Chow Emperors, B.C. 263.

of power. If, however, the circumstances of the period are critically examined it will be seen that it was nothing more than a fresh lease of sufferance. The central authority was only the shadow of a name; and if the amiability or personal virtue of the sovereign shone by contrast with his contemporaries, and obtained some faint semblance of a forgotten respect, it had no more practical significance than a single rift in a stormy sky. The prince passed away, and his virtues were forgotten. The clouds remained lowering over a House which all the tenderer virtues could not save.

Yuen's early acts showed that the teaching of Confucius had found him a willing student. He re-enforced the ancient ceremonies, and proclaimed the re-establishment of the reign of justice and of right. Several of the vassal princes took, with all its old formalities, the oath of fealty; and had Yuen possessed the martial qualities necessary to solve the question by waging war on the recalcitrant nobles, he might have made his reign the turning point in the history of China. With his respect for the past he had borrowed none of the political sagacity of Confucius; and he was essentially a man of peace. The wars between the tributary princes went on, and when one had achieved a great victory over his neighbour, the farce was gone through of soliciting by letter, couched in the terms of a superior and not a suppliant, the Emperor's sanction of a revolution within his dominions, which had doubled the territory of a powerful noble, and brought a victorious army to

within a week's march of the capital. So it happened that the Prince of Yue overthrew several of his neighbours, and joined their lands to his. Prominent among these was the State of Wou, which, as we have seen, had obtained many triumphs in Chinese territory, and which had enjoyed a line of kings of its own during six centuries and a half. The members of the vanquished family fled, so the story is narrated, to Japan, whither their great progenitor Taipe himself had retired in the twelfth century before our era, destined to become the ancestor of another ruling house of greater fame.* This great success added much to the reputation of Yue, whose prince was named chief of the great vassals, thus provoking the jealousy of the powerful and ambitious Tsins.

Kowtsin, the Prince of Yue, appears to have been a man of exceptional capacity and vigour. Forming a league with the princes disposed to support him, he proceeded to wage war on the Tsins, because they refused to pay tribute to him; and such were his activity and skill that they found it prudent to submit to a temporary indignity sooner than continue a contest which might terminate with serious loss. Kowtsin retained to his death possession of the territories won by the sword, and rejoiced in semi-regal privileges. We are told of how he sent to one of the nobles of his country, who had been sentenced to death, a sword with instructions to kill himself, thus anticipating by many centuries the practice of another Eastern court.

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* The Emperors of Japan trace back their origin to Taipe.

With the death of Kowtsin the predominance of the Yues passed away, and the Tsins then profited by the prudence of their chief in not provoking a premature contest. During the progress of this strife Yuen Wang died, and was succeeded by his son Ching Ting Wang, who followed very closely in the footsteps of his predecessor.

The Court chroniclers affirm that under the rule of this prince the Empire recovered nearly all its lost splendour, and certainly the private character of the sovereign shone by contrast with some of his predecessors. But the disintegrating causes so long at work still remained in force, and the absorption of the smaller principalities by the greater continued. Happy in his life Ching Ting Wang was unfortunate only in the events which immediately followed his death. Three sons were left to profit by and to emulate the example of a father who had given fresh lustre to virtues long foreign to the purple; but in their anxiety to obtain the supreme place they forgot the more honourable rivalry that should have been theirs in propping up a dynasty which depended upon the energy and ability of its members to save it from the untoward fate whither it was apparently tending so fast. The eldest son Gan Wang succeeded his father as Emperor; but in three months, before the Imperial mourning had been laid aside, he fell by the hand of his next brother Sou, who was in his turn slain by his younger brother Kao Wang, after enjoying the pageantry of supreme ruler during the brief space of five months.

Kao Wang's reign, though commencing with a crime, venial it must be allowed in the history of his House, was not fortunate in its character. The nobles scoffed at the authority of the Emperor, and refused homage to one whose strength was fully occupied with domestic brawls. He became little more than a puppet in the hands of another brother, who gradually acquired the reins of power, and ultimately secured for his descendant the Imperial title to which he had himself aspired. After reigning fifteen years Kao Wang died, and was succeeded by his son Weili Wang in those nominal functions which still appertained to the Emperor.

The troubles were now thickening on all sides. Looking back to this period the Chinese chroniclers have styled it "the warlike epoch," and, although we pass over this portion of Chinese history with as few details as possible, the title was well applied. This unfortunate Emperor, divested of the last shadow of authority remained, it is true, installed in his palace, but the day of his fall was plainly only postponed until one of the great nobles should gain a position which would justify him in standing forward as the claimant for the throne.* The brightest topic in the history of China at this period was furnished by the great deeds of Ouki, a general and a statesman of singular force of

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* The records state that the nine vases, which Yu, the founder of the first dynasty, had caused to be constructed as representing the original provinces of the Empire, were broken without anyone participating in the accident—an incident which was regarded by the Chinese as presaging the misfortune which threatened the State, and still more nearly the ruling family.

character. Originally an officer fighting for his paternal State of Loo, his most brilliant successes were obtained in the service of the Prince of Wei. His guiding precept was that "the strength and greatness of a state depended upon the virtues and application of the ruler." Fortunate in the field he rendered his master as valuable service in the cabinet by showing him that military triumphs are only justifiable as a means towards an end. The jealousy of those small minds, to which true merit is intolerable as barring the avenue to the promotion they covet, turned the favour of the Prince of Wei from Ouki, who for a second time was obliged to become an exile. The ability of the man triumphed over the outrages of fortune, and the numerous victories which he obtained in the service now of one prince and again of another would have sufficed, if achieved over a foreign foe or in the interest of the Chows, to give stability to the Empire. In the end, however, he fell a victim to the base schemes of his opponents, for he appears to have treated their threats with scorn, and to have neglected all precautions for defending his person. He paid the penalty of his fortitude or his rashness, being found murdered in his palace one morning, with no trace left of the assassins. The name and achievements of Ouki lend a lustre to the reigns of Weili Wang and his successor, Gan Wang, which they would otherwise lack.

The latter of these rulers was succeeded (B.C. 375) by his son Li Wang, whose brief reign would call for no comment, were it not for the growing

power of the principality of Tsi, the ruler of which, Wei Wang, was the first among the feudatories to take to himself the title of king. Although there was much in this step to shock the sentiment of a people like the Chinese, the high personal character and strict morals of Wei Wang shielded him from the censure which would otherwise have been bestowed upon him. Wei Wang seems to have acted on the sound principle of looking after his own affairs, for the story is still preserved of how he rewarded the services of an honest and capable governor, although all the court gossips were engaged in vilifying him because he refused to bribe them, and of how on the other hand he punished an incompetent governor whose praises were sung by all the courtiers, whom he paid heavily for their good word. Within seven years Li Wang's inglorious reign closed, and his brother Hien Wang ruled in his place. No change occurred in the character of the times. The reign of the latter, although Emperor for nearly half a century, was remarkable neither for the personal ability of the prince, nor for the acts carried out under his direction.

The most, indeed the only remarkable event of this period was the steadily increasing power and military vigour of the Prince of Tsin, who on several occasions overthrew large armies sent by his neighbours to harass his borders. Three princes eventually combined their forces against him, but at the battle of Chemen, where sixty thousand men are stated to have been slain, they had to confess a more skilful general and a braver army. Shortly after this great victory the

Prince of Tsin died, but his son and successor, Hiao-kong proved himself well able to take care of the interests committed to his charge. At a general council, summoned early in his reign, he announced to his followers that it would be his first object to raise the glory of his House to a still higher pitch than ever before, and to assist his purpose he proclaimed his want of the services of the most enlightened minister of the day. He obtained his wish in the person of Kongsunyang, who, banished from his own state, took service under him and devoted his best talents to the advancement of the Tsins. He drew up, and his master enforced, principles of government and a code of administration which, in the course of a short time, made Tsin the most powerful and best governed kingdom in the country. The consequences of the reforms he introduced were, we are told, that thefts and assaults were no longer to be met with, that idleness vanished from amongst the people and cowardice from the ranks of the soldiery, at the same time that the officials cast aside their former avarice and negligence.

Among those who beheld the steadily increasing power of the Tsins with feelings the reverse of those of pleasure was the Prince of Tsi, who considered the foremost place in the country to be his right; and the further progress of the Empire resolved itself into the rivalry of these two families. An interval of peace followed, but it was recognised on all sides that it was only the precursor of the inevitable struggle. Each potentate was actively engaged in

developing his resources and in training his army for the day of battle. A change had in the meanwhile taken place in the affairs of Tsin where, owing to the death of Hiaokong, the able minister Kongsunyang had lost his influence. His rivals supplanted him in the council of the new prince, and he himself found it prudent to seek safety in flight. Failing in his attempt he was brought back to the capital, and neither the long years of past service nor the promise of future assistance could save him and his family from death and disgrace. If his career had been marked by an unscrupulous zeal for the advancement of the interests of the Tsins, as evinced by his treacherous conduct towards his old teacher Kongtse Niang,* there was nothing in it to justify the ungrateful and foolish manner in which the new Prince Hoei Wen Wang treated him. The reforms which he had carried out survived his death to the benefit of the family for which he had toiled so long and with such striking assiduity.

During this reign flourished Mencius, the third great original Chinese thinker. Of noble birth, being closely connected with the princes of Loo, he had from an early age devoted himself to the study of virtue and morals. An ardent follower of Confucian doctrine he had arrived at the conclusion that good government was not only in itself the first of public virtues, but also the most pressing want of China. When he visited the Court of Wei, he was asked

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* See Mailla, vol. ii. pp. 278-279.

whether he would not toil zealously for the interests of that prince. His reply was, "How comes it that you speak of interests? It is only necessary to think of virtue and to practice it." It is scarcely necessary to add that such unworldly wisdom as this was not very palatable to the ambitious and worldly ruler of Wei. Mencius continued advocating measures which had a sound moral basis; but little attention was paid to him during his lifetime.

Another philosopher, Soutsin by name, whose proffer of service had been rejected by the Prince of Tsin, took a different course. Finding that devotion to pure ethics only led to his being treated with contumely, he entered the arena of politics, and travelling from one court to another devoted all his energy to the forming of a league among the princes of the Empire against the Prince of Tsin, who had received his overtures with expressions of scorn. The last years of Hien Wang's reign witnessed these schemes for the overthrow of one of the feudatories, but even if success had attended them there could have been no change in the relative position of the Emperor. Hien Wang's long reign closed at last, and he left to his son the unmeaning legacy which he had himself inherited from his father (B.C. 320). Of that son Chin Tsin Wang, whose brief reign extended over no more than six years, little need be said. The only change in the country—and it was one affecting its future much more nearly than the mere record of the daily events at the capital—was the steadily growing power of the Tsins, whose authority was extending

eastwards and southwards into the heart of the Empire. Neither the league of princes, nor the military prowess of their neighbours appeared able to retard their progress. One of their statesmen asserted at this time that "their country was not sufficiently large, and its people not rich enough" for their ambition.

Nan Wang, the next and last, strictly speaking, of the Chow Emperors, succeeded his father in B.C. 314; and the death of Mencius occurred in the earlier years of his reign. But the most important circumstance attending the accession of the new ruler was that the Prince of Tsin then perceived that the time had arrived for putting into effect the ulterior schemes which had so long slumbered in the background. The heritage of the Chows was ripe for division among the numerous claimants; but, if he could overthrow all these candidates, he would be in the position of its sole heir. The first year of Nan Wang's reign saw the Prince of Tsin victorious over his neighbours, laughing to scorn the threats of a league no sooner brought together than dissolved, and mustering larger armies than at any previous time for the execution of military enterprise. Nor was the policy he pursued for the purpose of advancing the object he had in view less astute than the means he possessed for enforcing it were formidable. Setting one prince against another by promises lavish to excess, but which could be either broken or left unfulfilled as most convenient, he was always able to bring a preponderance of force into the field. He employed against his neighbours and fellow princes the very weapons which a wise Emperor would

have used against himself, and in the end their efficacy was shown by complete success.

The natural consequence of this aggressive policy, carried out in an able and uncompromising manner, was that many ruling families, which had been in possession of their territories for centuries, were deposed, and in many instances also exterminated. About this time the Prince of Tsin, Hoei Wen Wang, died, and his son Wou Wang only ruled for a few months, when another son, the celebrated Chow Siang Wang, became the leader of the fortunes of this kingdom. In his hands the family policy acquired still greater force than before, and, casting aside all reserve, he offered sacrifice to the Lord of Heaven, with those formalities which were the peculiar privilege of the Emperor. The minister of a neighbouring potentate gave expression to the prevalent opinion when he said that the Prince of Tsin was "like a wolf or a tiger who wished to draw all the other princes into his claws that he might devour them." The struggle between the two states of Tsin and Tsi continued with varying fortune during most of the years of the long reign of Nan Wang; but in this instance, as in every other, final victory rested with the former.

For more than fifty years Nan Wang had remained a passive witness of the progress of these events, when suddenly, without any apparent reason, urged by some demon of unrest, he in his old age issued invitations for a league against the Tsins. On this reaching the ears of Chow Siang Wang, he at once marched an army against the capital. Nan Wang, incapable of

offering any resistance, surrendered himself without a blow, and became the dependent of his conqueror. After enjoying the glorious title of Emperor of China during fifty-nine years, he sank into the insignificant position of a vassal of the King of Tsin—a sphere which appears to have been the more suited to his talents. The facts are so expressive in themselves that it is unnecessary to add, as the Chinese historians do, that he died covered with ignominy.*

Thus came to the end which had been so long foreseen the third dynasty established in China. The virtues and the great qualities which had made its first Emperors the benefactors of their race had departed before the House had reached its manhood. The dislike of the people to break with associations intimately connected with the dawn of their political history, and, in a much stronger degree, the fact that the Empire had split up imperceptibly into principalities or kingdoms, practically independent, and each responsible to its subjects without any intervention on the part of a central authority, sufficed to put off the fall of a dynasty, which as a participator in practical affairs had no claim to further existence. The course of the history of China during three centuries would have been barren of profitable enquiry,

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* Hoeikong, a distant cousin of Nan Wang, and after his death the only surviving male representative of the Chows, continued to govern his small principality in Honan for some years. By some native historians he is styled Emperor for seven years under the title of Chow Keen. The Chow dynasty really closed with Nan Wang, and the Prince of Tsin took to himself the imperial functions.

but that they witnessed the feudal system at its height, the labours and writings of Laoutse, Confucius, and Mencius, and the steady growth of the military power of the Tsins, who were the first, of whom we have tangible knowledge, to discover and carry out a great idea in establishing a supreme and dominant administration over the inhabited portion of Eastern Asia. Brief as was their rule comparatively with the eight centuries and a half during which the Chows bore sway, they left behind them clear and creditable evidence of their capacity for government, whereas to impartial observers it must seem that the Chows accomplished very little indeed. It was their misfortune to have lived too long, and their apparently interminable old age brought to the record of their history many vices and weaknesses with scarcely a redeeming virtue.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TSIN DYNASTY.

Hopes of Tranquillity.—The Dawn of Great Events.—An Imperial Policy.—Ouki.—Failure of Tsin Ruler.—Tsin Chi Hoangti.—A Substituted Child.—Disgrace of Ouki.—The Hiongnou or Huns.—Lisseh.—The Task of Uniting China.—Adoption of a Naked Sword.—Limou.—A Plot.—Wang Pen.—Wang Tsien.—Lisin.—A Disastrous Expedition.—A Great Effort.—A Retrieval.—Incurs Hostility of Learned Classes.—His simplicity.—His Great Works.—Division of Empire.—Feudatories or not.—Great Roads.—His Struggle with the Men of Letters.—The Result.—Burning of the Books.—His Army; and Later Triumphs.—The Great Wall.—Rapid Fall of Tsin Power after his Death.

DISTRACTED as the country had been for so many generations by civil war, and by the rivalry of the great nobles, the conclusive triumph of the Prince of Tsin furnished the people with some reason for hoping that a period of greater tranquillity might now ensue. The more sanguine indulged speculations as to the extension of Empire and the scope for brilliant achievements under rulers who had, during centuries, guarded the Western marches against the Tartars; but the mass of the nation were the more satisfied because they anticipated rest. There were, however,

solid grounds for supposing that the warlike Tsins, who, from their watch-towers in Shensi and Kansuh, had been the witnesses of many of the troubles which had swept the western and central portions of the continent, would be inclined to employ the forces of the Empire in settling the local questions with which they had long grappled on their single resources. There were, therefore, not wanting signs that the Tsins would not only wield the sceptre with a vigour unknown for many reigns, but that their policy would be conceived in a larger, if also in a more grasping, spirit than that of any of their predecessors. Before them the Chinese rulers had been content to control a single people, and their authority had never ceased to bear a close resemblance to that of the patriarchs; but the Tsins aspired to higher rank. In their eyes nothing less than the dominant position in Eastern Asia was the right of the peoples of the fertile provinces watered by the three great rivers, and constituting China Proper; and they imagined it to be their task to accomplish this design. The imperial policy of China originated in this way, and the later dynasties did but expand the original plan of Hoangti, the great ruler of the Tsins.

Chow Siang, the victorious prince of the Tsins, did not live long enough to enjoy the fruits of his triumph; and, as his son Hiao Wang died in the same year, the leadership of the family and the charge of its idea passed to his grandson Chwang Siang Wang. This prince, while being fully aware of, and anxious to realise the great prize at which Chow Siang had

aimed, does not appear to have perceived that, when raised to the throne as the first Emperor of the Fourth Dynasty, the game was little more than half won. The Tsins were indeed the most powerful, warlike, and ambitious of the principalities; but after all they were only one among many. The Chows had fallen, and fallen by their prowess; but each of the feudatories saw in that event only the removal of the obstacle to the supreme height of his ambition. The long line of the Chows had at length reached its termination, and the last descendant of the great Wou Wang had met with the ignominious fate which his own crimes and those of his predecessors had brought upon his head. But the final settlement had yet to be obtained.

The first act of Chwang Siang Wang was to order the invasion of the territories of his neighbour the Prince of Wei; and his generals defeating the enemy in the field captured the two principal cities of that state. This striking success, enhanced by minor victories elsewhere, defeated the main object of the Emperor by creating a panic among the other great nobles, for the sense of a common danger led to the forming of a coalition amongst them too formidable for him to cope with. Moreover they secured the services of Ouki, the best general of the age, and under his leading the tide of war was rolled back from the land of Wei into the territories of Tsin. The campaign closed with complete success for the confederates, and Chwang Siang Wang died a few months later, after a brief reign of three

years. It thus seemed as if, before they had fairly commenced their occupation of the throne, the Tsins were to be swept from their pride of place and relegated to the insignificant position from which they had sprung.

The title of Emperor, divested of all but nominal meaning by this disastrous war, passed to Chwang Siang's reputed son, the celebrated Tsin Chi Hoangti. Of his origin various stories are told by the Chinese chroniclers, who unite in denying that he was the late Emperor's son; but as none of them explain how it was that a boy of thirteen years, known to be a substituted child, should have been unanimously selected as the leader of the Tsins at this crisis, their stories can only be received with reserve.* If Hoangti was not really born in the purple he speedily showed that he was equal to the cares of government. His first object was to break up the coalition of the princes who, having removed the immediate danger which threatened them, fancied that there was no longer any necessity for keeping their forces in the field. While several of them disbanded their armies, the two most powerful quarrelled and declared war upon each other. These dissensions afforded the new Emperor a breathing space, which he turned to the best account.

His prime object was to detach the general Ouki from the service of the Prince of Wei, and in this the

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* See Mailla, vol. ii. p. 370, &c. Chi Hoangti, on account of his edicts against the literati, has never been popular with Chinese historians.

practices prevailing at the courts of Chinese feudatories greatly assisted him. Bribing a functionary of that prince to poison his master's ear against the faithful Ouki, Hoangti had the satisfaction of seeing the one general he feared in disgrace and driven into retirement.* The object of his dread being removed, he gradually seized several of the strong cities belonging to his neighbours, and when an attempt was made to revive the coalition he defeated his unskilful opponents in battle. The success of his arms, and the reputation he was acquiring by the ability evinced in his administration, were steadily winning public opinion round to his side. The cities which he wrested from his foes remained in his possession, and, while every other province was shrinking, his was extending on all sides. It was practically the conquest of China upon which he had embarked, and the vigour with which he commenced the enterprise afforded good promise of ultimate success.

A single instance may be given of the larger views which dictated his policy. On the western and northern borders the Tartar† tribes had long been troublesome, and prominent among these were the Hiongnou, identified with the Huns of a later age. Hoangti set the example, and several of the other princes

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* "Ouki obeyed without offering any resistance, and giving himself up to pleasure night and day, died four years after his disgrace."—Mailla.

† At this point it will be advisable to state that in these pages the term Tartar is retained and used in its commonly accepted sense; that is, it is applied generally to all the tribes in North-Eastern Asia, although many of these were of the Turkish stock.

followed him, of taking precautions against their inroads by the construction of walls, a system of defence which he ultimately expanded into the Great Wall. At this period (B.C. 238) his attention was diverted from affairs of state to domestic troubles which broke out in the palace.* These internal brawls are invested with historical importance, because they led to the passing of an edict against foreigners in the following year, which would have become law, but for the able and eloquent pleading of a man who, more than any other, assisted the Emperor in carrying out his great design of making China a united country. Lisseh, such was his name, held a high office at the Court, when the edict threatened him, as the native of another province, with ruin; but on the eve of departure he sent the Emperor a statement of how much previous rulers had benefited by the ability of aliens, winding up with the following appeal, not less forcible than eloquent, to his better judgment: "I do not pause

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* The story goes, in the Chinese chronicles, that Hoangti was not the son of Chwang Siang, but of a merchant, Lieou Pou Wei, who sold a slave, great with child, to the Emperor, the child being Hoangti. Whether there was any foundation or not for this story it is impossible to say; but for many years it proved a stumbling block in the path of the young Emperor. On his reputed father's death his mother pursued a life of dissipation, which at last came to the ears of Hoangti. He punished her lovers, and temporarily banished his mother. Nor did his misfortunes cease here, for the merchant Lieou Pou Wei, who had been rewarded by Chwang Siang for unknown services with a place at court, continued to be a source of trouble to him. Aspiring to a higher eminence, he intrigued against Hoangti, and sought to bind that ruler to his will by dark whisperings of the secret hold which he possessed over him. Hoangti was not a safe man thus to trifle with, and Lieou Pou Wei, seeing the coming storm, was fain to poison himself.

to examine if it may on the present occasion be expedient for private reasons to banish foreigners from your service or to retain them; all that I insist upon is that in banishing them you are not only depriving yourself of useful supporters, but you are handing them over to other princes, jealous of your glory and your power. By offering this insult to these foreigners, you make them your enemies; you put a weapon in their hands against yourself; you inspire them with the desire to serve their princes against your interests. My zeal for your service and your honour compels me, Prince, to make these representations to you, and to entreat you to give them your most serious attention." The Emperor perceived from this address that Lisseh was a man after his own heart, and at once gave orders for the withdrawal of the edict. Lisseh was restored to his post and taken into the confidence of the ruler. At this moment Hoangti's domestic troubles were smoothed down by the death of Lieou Pou Wei, who had wished to pass himself off as the Emperor's father. In B.C. 235, his hands being thus freed, Hoangti resumed military operations against his neighbours; and assisted and encouraged in his main object by the able Lisseh, he urged the task of subduing China briskly on towards a satisfactory termination. The unity of the Empire became the watchword of these two men.

It was at this time that Hoangti adopted the custom of sitting on the throne with a naked sword in his hand—a fit emblem of the means by which he would have to attain undisputed supremacy, and also of the severity which he intended to employ. For

many years wars and military operations monopolised his attention; and it was not until his reign was drawing to a close that he found it possible to return the sword to the scabbard. His first campaign after this lull was against the Prince of Chow,* whom he at first defeated; but the skill of General Limou turned the scale against him. Reinforcements were sent from the capital, and the year closed with the capture of several important cities by Hoangti's troops. Almost simultaneously with this doubtful war the ruler of Han—who had seen the triumphs of the Tsins with some apprehension, and thought to secure better terms by a timely surrender—was deposed from his seat, and compelled to retire into private life in the dominions of his conqueror. This easy success paved the way towards an effectual settlement of the complication with Chow, whose victorious general, Limou, still kept the field in defiance of Tsin. But Hoangti, too cautious to risk a campaign against a general superior to any in his service, had recourse to the same arts so successfully employed in the case of Ouki. A courtier was bribed to malign the absent general, and to turn the mind of the Prince of Chow against his sole supporter. The intrigue was more successful than it deserved to be. Limou was recalled from his charge, and, on his refusing to obey the summons, assassinated by hirelings sent from the palace.

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* This principality must not be confounded with the lately reigning family of the same name.

Its last bulwark thus removed Hoangti's army overran the province of Chow. The capital Hantan was sacked, and the prince with his family became prisoners only to experience the severity of their foe. Before the year B.C. 228 closed, the large and once powerful kingdom of Chow had become a province of the fast rising Chinese Empire. Hoangti had now the opportunity to turn his attention to another quarter. Residing at his court was Prince Tan, heir of the ruler of Yen, whom, "either out of settled policy or from whim," Hoangti flagrantly insulted. Tan, burning with revenge, fled the court, and proceeded to instruct an assassin who was instigated to murder Hoangti, by the hope of thus meriting the title of "liberator of the Empire." The plot nearly succeeded. The assassin was admitted into the presence and was on the point of drawing his poniard, when the movement caught the quick eye of the king. In the scuffle Hoangti got the better of his assailant, and with one blow of his sabre severed his leg from his body. Tan's plot thus failed, but it was a narrow escape.*

Hoangti soon discovered that Tan was at the bottom of this plot, and thereupon gave orders to his general, Wang Pen, to overrun and subdue the terri-

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* The details of this plot afford proof of the terrible earnestness and resolution of the Chinese character. Kinkou the assassin, perceiving the difficulty of obtaining an audience with the Emperor, induced Fanyuki, on whose head Hoangti had placed a price, to commit suicide so that he might the better disarm any suspicion. Fanyuki, believing that Kinkou would thereby be able to play the part of his avenger, slew himself. There are few instances in history of a spirit of revenge having inspired so desperate an act for the expectation of idly gratifying it.

tories of Yen—orders which were faithfully carried out. The ruler of that state, in order to avert the coming storm, executed his son Tan, and sent his head to Hoangti, while he himself fled into the wilds of Leaoutung. The same year witnessed the not less decided triumph of his arms over the forces of Wei, the capital of which was stormed, and the unfortunate ruler sent to Hienyang for execution. Thus did the work proceed briskly of uniting the Chinese under a single will. The times needed a policy of blood and iron, and they had produced the man. Of the great principalities there now only remained Choo, but the task of subduing it was more formidable than any yet attempted. It had to be undertaken, however, if the design was to be completed. Extensive preparations were made for this war, and the Emperor applied to his generals for their opinion as to the number of troops necessary to employ against Choo. One general named Lisin, anxious at the same time to distinguish himself and to say what he thought would be agreeable to his master, offered to undertake the enterprise if two hundred thousand men were placed at his orders. Wang Tsien, on the other hand, the Nestor of Chinese commanders at this period and the father of Wang Pen already mentioned, said that not fewer than six hundred thousand* men would suffice.

The opinion of the former pleased Hoangti better than that of the latter, and, reproaching Wang Tsien

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* These numbers were, of course, used figuratively.

as a dotard, he entrusted Lisin with an army of the strength he had specified. Lisin and his lieutenant, Moungtien, at once invaded the province, and overcame the first line of resistance in the border cities; but their adversary was not less skilful than they were, and attacking them by surprise inflicted a severe defeat upon them. More than forty thousand men are said to have perished during the battle and the pursuit; and the splendid army of the Tsins was driven in utter confusion back into its own country. History does not preserve any record of the fate of Lisin, but it may be assumed that, if he did not fall in the battle, he never dared to appear afterwards in the presence of the enraged Hoangti.

Lisin's promises had for the moment been more agreeable, but they had been falsified. It remained only to have recourse to the experience and more sober judgment of the veteran general Wang Tsien. Appealed to by the sovereign who, only a few months before, had called him a dotard, Wang Tsien, despite his infirmities and his years, consented to take the command, on the condition that an army of not less than six hundred thousand men was collected, and placed at his disposal. This vast host having been assembled by the energy of the Emperor, ably assisted by the minister Lisseh, the doubt very intelligibly suggested itself to the mind of the general whence the supplies necessary for it were to come. Wang Tsien addressed himself to Hoangti on the subject, and the latter's reply is noteworthy: "Do not let that disquiet you, I have provided for everything. I promise you tha

provisions shall rather be wanting in my own palace than in your camp."

The general proved himself to be as skilful in leading his troops as the Emperor had shown himself in collecting them and in providing for their wants. In a great battle which shortly ensued between the rival hosts we are told that Wang Tsien, availing himself of a false movement made by the enemy, threw their army into confusion and drove it from the field. After this victory the principality was subjected by Wang Tsien, who placed garrisons in the strong cities. The members of the ruling family were sent to Hien-yang where they shared the fate of many of their peers. The complete subjugation of Choo was followed by the annexation of Yen, and also of the smaller provinces of Tai and Tsi. In this latter task Wang Pen assisted his sire.

These later triumphs completed the task which Hoangti had set himself. The independent kingdoms, which had parcelled out amongst themselves the Chinese Empire, had been destroyed; their dynasties were exterminated; and their territories became the possession of the Tsins. Over and above all, the leading idea of the unity of the Empire had been realised. It only remained for Hoangti to reap the reward of his valour, prudence, and good fortune, and by some formal act place the seal to his great achievement.

His first measure was to change his name and style from his patronymic Ching Wang to Tsin Chi Hoangti, which signifies the first sovereign Emperor of the Tsins. Not free from the personal vanity of mortals

he sought by this high-sounding title to perpetuate the memory of his reign, which an impartial observer will always admit could afford to stand on its own merits; but the Court chroniclers of his own country were the more indignant with him because he strove thereby to put himself on a pedestal apart from, if not superior to, that occupied by the semi-mythical patriarchs and heroes of the first two dynasties. For this assumption of superiority, as well as for the indifference he showed to established etiquette, Hoangti incurred the hostility of the lettered classes, and his subsequent acts embittered rather than mollified their feelings. During his lifetime they could not refrain from expressing how much their sentiments were shocked by his acts, and after his death their rage was indulged uncontrolled. Nevertheless Hoangti had accomplished his wish. He ruled a united China, and the people had peace.*

Like most Chinese rulers he patronised astronomy and revised the calendar. Undeterred by opposition, he abolished many useless ceremonies, striving to attain the practical in all things with the least possible outlay—these measures being intensely unpopular among the officials, accustomed to attend to the minutest forms, and to act on every occasion in obedience to precedent. The embellishment of his capital should not be lost sight of among his other undertakings. One of his first edicts was to the effect that, as the people had no longer any apprehension on the

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* For a specimen of the sentiments of the Chinese literati at this period see Pauthier, p. 213.

score of civil war,—"peace under his reign being universal"—all weapons should be sent to Hienyang where was stationed the elite of his army as well as the national arsenal. It is written, and it is not difficult to understand why such was the case, that "the skilful disarming of the provinces added daily to the wealth and prosperity of the capital." The Hall of Audience in the palace was ornamented with twelve statues, made from the spoil of his numerous campaigns, and each of these weighed twelve thousand pounds. Outside the city he constructed another palace, on a vast scale, or rather a series of palaces, with magnificent gardens attached, and this became known as the Palace of Delight. The character of the Emperor revealed itself more clearly in the fact that ten thousand men could be drawn up in order of battle in one of its courts.

Hoangti at once divided the Empire into thirty-six provinces, and, when the preliminary arrangements had been completed, he made preparations for visiting the possessions which, the first time for centuries, recognised a common master under his sway. One of his ministers suggested that he should divide the provinces among his children and blood relations by bestowing fiefs upon them. The suggestion did not find favour in the eyes of the Emperor, and showed that the man who made it had but very faintly perceived the significance of his master's policy. Lisseh had little difficulty in exposing the evils of such a course, and in an eloquent address described the troubles the people had to endure from a divided

country.* The Emperor put the question in a nutshell when he said, "Good government is impossible under a multiplicity of masters." Governors and subgovernors were then appointed in each of the provinces, and the organisation† thus drawn up exists with very few modifications at the present time, a work alone sufficient to stamp Hoangti as a great ruler.

During the Emperor's journeys throughout his dominions the main features of the country and the condition of the people came under his eye. Recognising that one of the best ways to increase the prosperity of his people was to improve the means of communication between one part of the Empire and another, the Emperor gave orders that highroads should be laid down in all directions. His attention was the more drawn to the matter because in the East it is the custom when a great man visits a district to repair all the roads in it, and Hoangti, while enjoying the benefit of this rule, knew that, outside his line of march, the roads were of a very different description to those which had been hastily prepared for his arrival. Wishing to see with his own eyes, he may even have diverged from his route for the purpose of observing the naked reality. His own words sum up the situation: "These roads have been made expressly for me, and I am indeed well satisfied. It is not just that I personally should benefit by a convenience of which my subjects have more need than

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* See p. 216 of Pauthier.

† See Mailla, vol. ii. pp. 394–96, and Pauthier, pp. 216–217.

I can have, and one also which I can procure for them. Therefore I decree that roads shall be made in all directions through the Empire." The autocrat's orders were carried out, and the grand roads still remain, two thousand years after his death, to testify to the splendour of his genius.

It was at this period (B.C. 219–18) that the collision which had been long imminent between Hoangti and the literati occurred. In those days it was customary for the kings of China to ascend lofty mountains for the purpose of offering sacrifices on their summits; and the learned classes were not unnaturally anxious that this should be done in accordance with form. Their representation of what the early emperors had done became tedious by repetition, and their admonitions roused the ire rather than inspired the devotion of the impatient Hoangti. These discussions he cut short by saying that, "You vaunt the simplicity of the ancients; but I act after a still simpler fashion than they did." The Chinese literati have always been noted for the obstinate courage they have shown in expressing their opinions at all hazards; but in Hoangti they encountered an opponent too powerful and too free from prejudice and superstition to be vanquished by the stock weapons in their armoury.*

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* Hoangti's concluding words on this occasion were, "When I have need of you I will let you know my orders." M. Pauthier has called Hoangti the Chinese Napoleon; but the simile appears to us inexact. Hoangti bears much more resemblance to Louis the Fourteenth in French history, or to the Roman Emperor Adrian.

The contest had not yet reached its crisis. The resentment of the king against his enemies was slumbering, and the literati were only biding their time for a favourable opportunity to reassert the rights of which they considered they had been wrongfully deprived. The occasion offered itself five years later (B.C. 213) when Hoangti had summoned to his capital all the governors and principal officials for a General Council of the Empire. The scene we may well imagine was imposing. The men, who had made China a single Empire by their valour and ability, assembled in the magnificent palace erected from the spoils of kingdoms to do honour to the Emperor who had inspired their efforts; and side by side with these representatives of practical politics a small body of theoretical observers, wedded to their own beliefs and traditions, containing all the book learning of the country in their ranks, defiant and hostile, holding Hoangti to be a dangerous and unscrupulous innovator, and not refraining from expressing their opinion in words. It was only in consonance with human nature that the long pent-up hostility of the two classes, the practical man of affairs, and the theoretical student, who was nothing if not the devotee of antiquity, reduced to a focus within the walls of this palace, should reveal itself in acts. Hoangti may be credited with sufficient knowledge of men to have made this clear to him; and he shrewdly suspected that the literati would be unable to curb their feelings. His anticipations were fulfilled, and his opponents put themselves forward as the aggressors.

Hoangti called upon those present to express their candid opinion of his government, and of the new legislation which he had inaugurated. Upon this a courtier rose, and delivered a panegyric on what he had accomplished. "Truly you have surpassed the very greatest of your predecessors even at the most remote period." This eulogium brought matters to a climax. The literati, unable to tolerate this last insult to their heroes, broke into murmurs, and one, more courageous than the rest, gave vent to his disapproval. He began by styling the former speaker "a vile flatterer unworthy of the high position which he occupied," and, proceeding to heap praise on the earlier rulers, he concluded a speech not less remarkable for its bad taste than for its weakness in argument, by advocating the division of the Empire into principalities. Hoangti cut short the admonitions of this no doubt highly respectable individual by reminding him that that point had been already discussed and decided. But as the point was one of the first importance he called upon Lisseh to state over again the reasons which rendered the maintenance of the unity of the Empire advisable.

Lisseh's speech is so remarkable, both as an exposition of policy and as a defence of the reasons which dictated the burning of the books, that it should be read in its entirety.* The Emperor expressed his entire

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* See Pauthier, pp. 223–26. The following is the substance of this great speech:—"It must be admitted," he said, "after what we have just heard, that men of letters are as a rule very little acquainted with what concerns the government of a country, not that government of pure speculation, which is nothing more than

approval of Lisseh's remarks and ordered him to lose no time in carrying out his propositions. All books were proscribed, and the authorities burnt every work except those treating of medicine, agriculture, &c. By these violent measures Hoangti hoped to root out from the memory of his people the names of the early Emperors. Before condemning this as an inexcusable act of Vandalism, the hostility of the literati to every act from the commencement of his tenure of power must be taken into consideration. Nor can it truthfully be said, as has been advanced by one writer,* that this was a struggle between "light" and "darkness," "knowledge" and "ignorance," in which brute force gained the upper hand For if the situation is thoroughly grasped, if we make allowance for the antipathies of the rival classes, surely it will be admitted that the "light" and the "knowledge" were on the side of Hoangti and his ministers, and not of

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a phantom, vanishing the nearer we approach to it, but the practical government which consists in keeping men within the sphere of their proper duties. With all their pretence of knowledge they are, in this matter, only ignorant. They can tell you by heart everything which has happened in the past, back to the most remote period, but they are, or seem to be, ignorant of what is being done in these later days, of what is passing under their eyes. . . . Incapable of discerning that the thing which was formerly suitable would be wholly out of place to-day, that that which was useful, perhaps necessary, in the past would be positively injurious in the time in which we live, they would have everything arranged in exact imitation of what they find written in their books." Lisseh then went on to denounce the learned classes as enemies of the public weal, and as a class apart and uninfluenced by the national feeling. "Now is the time or never," he concluded, "to close the mouth of these secret enemies, to place a curb upon their audacity."

* M. Pauthier.

Chunyuyue and the chroniclers. While the former perceived the necessities and true wants of the nation, the latter were foolishly clamouring for the observance of idle forms with the same breath that they advocated measures inevitably entailing the dismemberment of the Empire. Hoangti's extreme remedy of destroying the written record of his predecessors' virtues was one that cannot be expected to receive the approval of civilised people. On the other hand there was much to justify such a course in the eyes of Hoangti and his ministers, and although all subsequent generations of Chinese historians have piled obloquy on their heads they have failed to obscure the greatness of this Emperor, who founded the political entity known as China.*

The peace which had been established within the country by a long series of successes only inspired Hoangti with the desire to render the stability of his triumph the more assured by making his power felt at and beyond his extreme borders. Strong at home he would be respected abroad. Drawing his troops from classes peculiarly suitable for a military life—"from those who were without any fixed profession, and those among the ranks of the people possessed of exceptional physical strength"—he found himself the master of a regular army which was capable of extending his dominions in whatever direction he desired.

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* The strife did not terminate, however, with the burning of the books. A few months after the great debate referred to large numbers of the literati were arrested, and four hundred and sixty were executed, while others were banished.

During these later years his principal successes were obtained in the south, when, after annexing the states of Tonquin and Cochin China, the terror of his arms went before him, it is said, into the kingdoms of Ava and Bengal. His general, Moungtien, about the same time carried on operations against the tribes beyond Kansuh, and there is some reason for believing that the town of Hamil, many hundreds of miles distant from Kansuh, fell into his hands, and thus became for the first time a watch-tower for China in the direction of Central Asia, a position which it has often since held.

These victories in the field were the precursors of the great defensive work on the northern frontier, which had been conceived early in the reign, and which has become immortalised as the Great Wall. Hoangti, with the practical good sense which was characteristic of him, perceived that extension of dominion over the barbarian tribes of the north would be attended by quite as many disadvantages as advantages. Having chastised his old foes he withdrew therefore his forces from their solitudes, and employed his soldiers, and a large number of the male population as well, in constructing a fortified wall from the seacoast to the extremity of Kansuh. He lived long enough to see this gigantic undertaking finished; and, whether this rampart effected everything its originator expected or not, Hoangti had the satisfaction of knowing that he had done everything in his power for the protection of the people whom he had united. In another respect he had put the seal to his own great-

ness. The educated might continue to sneer at his shortcomings from their standard, and brand him as a reckless destroyer; but in the Great Wall,* which exists now, two thousand years after his death, he left a monument to his own greatness, and one which would impress later ages, better than any words, with a true sense of what manner of man he was.

Hoangti did not long survive these great and crowning acts of his career. Seized with some malady (B.C. 210) which is not specified, he neglected the simplest precautions and paid the penalty of his rashness. The death of this great ruler roused all the passions dormant during his life, and among the people the belief spread that after his death his estates would be divided among many claimants. In this the popular fancy proved too true. With Hoangti were buried many of his wives and large quantities of treasure—a custom peculiar to the Huns and, among Chinese rulers, to the chiefs of Tsin. The striking achievements which illustrated his reign are the best evidence of his personal character. Loving splendour, he yet repudiated idle form; magnificent in his ideas, he left as the record of his reign great public works to testify to the pureness of his taste as well as to his care for his people; and, abstemious in his personal habits, he set an example of simplicity in the midst of the luxury of his court. His favourite exercise was walking, and this

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* For a description of this work, see Pauthier, pp. 10–13. Du Halde and numerous other writers (including three English travellers, Bell, Fleming and Michie) may also be consulted for details of various portions of it.

alone would mark him out as apart from other Chinese rulers. As a soldier he was not particularly distinguished, but he knew how to select good generals ; and as an administrator he was not too self-confident to despise the aid of a minister such as Lisseh. He left an example which the greatest of his successors might seek to follow, and while, in a personal sense, the least Chinese of all the Emperors, he was undoubtedly the first to give form to the national will on what may be called Imperial questions. In that sense none of his successors, down to the present dynasty, were more ardent supporters of Chinese dignity than he was.

The death of Hoangti proved the signal for the outbreak of disturbances throughout the realm. Within a few months five princes had founded as many kingdoms, each hoping, if not to become supreme, at least to remain independent. Moungtien, beloved by the army, and at the head, as he tells us in his own words, of three hundred thousand soldiers, might have been the arbiter of the Empire ; but a weak feeling of respect for the Imperial authority induced him to obey an order sent by Eulchi, Hoangti's son and successor, commanding him "to drink the waters of eternal life." Eulchi's brief reign of three years was a succession of misfortunes. The reins of office were held by the eunuch Chowkow, who first murdered the minister Lisseh and then Eulchi himself. Ing Wang, a grandson of Hoangti, was the next and last of the Tsin Emperors. On coming to power he at once caused Chowkow, whose crimes had been dis-

covered, to be arrested and executed. This vigorous commencement proved very transitory, for when he had enjoyed nominal authority during six weeks, Ing Wang's troops, after a reverse in the field, went over in a body to Lieou Pang, the leader of a rebel force. Ing Wang put an end to his existence, thus terminating, in a manner not less ignominious than any of its predecessors, the dynasty of the Tsins, which Hoangti had hoped to place permanently on the throne of China, and to which his genius gave a lustre far surpassing that of many other families who had enjoyed the same privilege during a much longer period.

CHAPTER V.

RISE OF THE HANS.

Early Career of Lieou Pang.—Proclaimed Emperor as Kaotsou.—His Moderation.—Construction of Bridges.—Changliang.—Embellishes Singanfoo.—Kaotsou as a General.—Military Art.—Rewards his Followers.—Lesser Emperor.—Court Criminals.—Hansin.—Siaoho.—The Tartars.—Mehe.—His Successes.—Emperor besieged and Escapes.—Emperor Unnerved.—A Treaty.—Nanhai.—Death of Emperor.—The Empress Liuchi.—Condition of Empire.—Character of Kaotsou.

This crisis in the history of the country had afforded one of those great men, who rise periodically from the ranks of the people to give law to nations, the opportunity for advancing his personal interests at the same time that he made them appear to be identical with the public weal. Of such geniuses, if the test applied be the work accomplished, there have been few with higher claims to respectful and admiring consideration than Lieou Pang, who after the fall of the Tsins became the founder of the Han dynasty under the style of Kaotsou. Originally the governor of a small town, he had, soon after the death of Hoangti, gathered round him the nucleus of a formidable army; and, while nominally serving under one of the greater

princes, he scarcely affected to conceal that he was fighting for his own interest. On the other hand, he was no mere soldier of fortune, and the moderation which he showed after victory enhanced his reputation as a general. Emulating Hoangti in his great qualities, he sought to put himself in a more favourable light before the people by showing respect to men of letters, and by using every effort in his power to save and collect the few books which had been rescued from the sweeping decree of the Tsin Emperor. His task was, however, only half begun when the Tsins were deposed, for there was, besides his own, a second large army in the field under a rival general, not less ambitious than Lieou Pang, but, as the event proved, less equal to the occasion. Their antagonistic ambitions encountered in mortal strife, and after a desperate struggle the tactics or the good fortune of Lieou Pang prevailed. The path to the throne being thus cleared of the last obstacle, the successful general became Emperor.*

His first act was to proclaim an amnesty to all those who had borne arms against him. In a public procla-

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* The Chinese, and indeed most Orientals, love to make their history demonstrate certain principles to which they may be attached; and none of them is more frequently vindicated than that of brute force being inferior to brain power. The crafty general is always represented as superior to the mere fighting leader of men. In this case Lieou Pang is a model for all who come after him. Hiang Yu, or Pawang, his opponent, is a giant, a kind of Goliath, without brains. It may be observed here that early in his career Lieou Pang, like Macbeth, had been warned that one day he should be Emperor. The scene will bear quotation. "A noted physiognomist once met him on the high road, and throwing himself down before him said, 'I see by the expression of your

mation he expressed his regret at the sufferings of the people "from the evils which follow in the train of war," and his desire that all should enjoy under his rule the advantages of peace abroad and tranquillity at home. This act, at once of discretion and clemency, confirmed public opinion in favour of one who had already shown himself to be a successful soldier and a shrewd statesman, and did more to consolidate his position than his assumption of the glowing title of Lofty and August Emperor.* During the earlier years of his reign he chose the city of Loyang as his capital —now the flourishing and populous town of Honan— but at a later period he removed it to Singanfoo, in the western province of Shensi. His dynasty became known by the name of the small state where he was born, and which had fallen, early in his career, into his hands. Varied as were the incidents of his reign, none was of more permanent importance than the consolidation of the Imperial power under the Hans. Kaotsou, imitating in his policy his great predecessor, the Tsin Emperor, sanctioned or personally undertook various important public works, which in many places still exist to testify to the greatness of his character. Chinese historians declare that much of the credit for these great enterprises was due to his general and minister, Changliang, but all history can do is to

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features that you are destined to be Emperor, and I offer you in anticipation the tribute of respect that a subject owes his sovereign. I have a daughter, the fairest and wisest in the Empire; take her as your wife. So confident am I that my prediction will be realised that I gladly offer her to you.' "—Du Halde, vol. i. p. 344.

* Kao Hoangti.

associate his name with undertakings which tended to increase the brilliance of the reign.

Prominent among these works must be placed the bridges constructed along the great roads in Western China. The city of Singanfoo was in those days difficult of approach by reason of the mountainous country which surrounded it on most sides. Long detours were necessary in order to reach it from the south, and while its position possessed apparent advantages for the capital of the Empire, it was imperative that something should be done to render it more accessible of approach. One hundred thousand workmen were consequently engaged to construct roads across these mountains, and where required to cut through them. Valleys were filled up with the mass of the mountains which had towered above them, and where this did not suffice, bridges supported on pillars were thrown across from one side to the other. In other places bridges were suspended in air, and these, protected on each side by balustrades, admitted four horsemen to travel abreast. One of the most remarkable of these "flying bridges," as the Chinese call them, measured one hundred and fifty yards in length, and was at an altitude of more than five hundred feet above the valley. It is believed to be still in perfect condition.* The Chinese may fairly take great credit to themselves for these wonderful engineering feats, which were achieved nearly two thousand years before sus-

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* Pauthier, p. 234; see also illustrations at end of his volume for sketches of these wonderful bridges.

pension bridges were included in the category of European engineers. By these means Singanfoo became easy of access to the Chinese and all their tributaries, who could reach it by some of the grandest highroads in the world. Not content with laying down these roads, post-houses, travellers' rests, and caravanserais were constructed at short intervals along the chief routes, so that travelling over the vast distances of the Empire was made as much a task of pleasure as possible, and no excuse was left for the subject not repairing to the capital whenever his presence was required. The effect produced on trade by these increased facilities for locomotion must also have been very beneficial, and no act of Kaotsou's reign places him higher in the scale of sovereigns than the improvement of the roads and the construction of these remarkable bridges.

Although Kaotsou commenced his reign by evincing a moderation towards his opponents which, prudent as it was, was rare in the annals of the history of the country, it was long before he could be pronounced to be safe from the machinations of his enemies; and in his later years the danger to his family was increased by, in some cases, the discontent, and in others, the disappointed ambition of his generals, who had in earlier days been his comrades and had assisted to make him Emperor. In all his actions the presence of magnanimity is to be traced, and he appears to have been always peculiarly susceptible to generous impulses. One officer, a devoted follower of his opponent Pawang, had been fined a large sum of

money* for having spoken treason against the Emperor. Unable to raise the amount, he sold his family into slavery and took service himself with a silversmith in order to satisfy the demands of the Emperor. Fortunately his friends interceded for him, and Kaotsou, struck by the singular harshness of the gallant soldier's misfortunes, not only pardoned and released him and his family, but also gave him a post of honour at his own Court. Kipou proved a devoted minister, and his faithful services amply recompensed the clemency of the sovereign.

Notwithstanding that Kaotsou had won his way to supreme authority by the sword, it would appear that contemporary opinion denied him any claim to be considered a great general. He himself frequently declared that he owed his success to his capacity for selecting the best commanders and administrators, and although this affectation of modesty often appeared to be only intended as a studied compliment to his followers, there was perhaps more truth in it than might be supposed. Such at least was the opinion of Hansin, one of the first generals of the time, who in the following conversation showed that he was the first man in history to draw a distinction between the now admitted radical difference of the ordinary general and the great commander. The Emperor asked him how many men he thought he could lead efficiently in the field; to which Hansin replied, "Sire! you can lead an army of a hundred thousand men very well,

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* A thousand gold taels.—Mailla, vol. ii. p. 487.

but that is all." "And you?" said the Emperor. "The more numerous my soldiers the better I shall lead them," replied the confident general. So far back as this remote period, this conversation would show that the truth of the modern colloquial phrase of there being "generals and generals" was recognised in China.

Another instance of the estimation in which military skill rather than brute courage was held at this period is afforded by the high honours and awards which were conferred on Siaoho, who, without engaging in the active bustle of battle, had planned and drawn up all the Emperor's campaigns. Great discontent was caused by the preferment of Siaoho, of whose distinguished services very little was known by the army at large, and on these murmurings reaching Kaotsou's ears he summoned his principal officers, whom he addressed in the following speech: "You find, I hear, reason for complaint in that I have rewarded Siaoho above his fellows. Tell me, at the chase who are they who pursue and capture the prey? The dogs. But who direct and urge on the dogs? Are they not the hunters? All you present have indeed worked hard for me; you have pursued your prey with vigour and you at last overthrew and captured it. In all this you deserve the same merit as the dogs of the chase. But Siaoho has conducted the whole of the war. It was he who regulated everything, he who ordered you to attack the enemy at the opportune moment, he who by his tactics made you the master of the cities and provinces which you have conquered; and on this

account he deserves all the credit of the hunter, which is the more worthy of reward."*

But while showing special marks of favour to Siaoho, he left none of his followers without reward, thus giving a stability to his regime greater than was possessed by any of his immediate predecessors. Alone among his supporters, he overlooked the claims of his father. This was probably due to inadvertence, and we are told that no one was more surprised at the apparent neglect than the father himself. However, he took prompt steps to remind his son that in the distribution of rewards he had as yet received nothing. Dressed in his most costly garments, he presented himself before Kaotsou, protesting in a speech of studied humility that he was the least and most obedient of his subjects. Kaotsou understood the reproach contained in his father's action, and at once called a council of his ministers for the purpose of proclaiming him "the lesser Emperor."† Taking him by the hand, he seated him on a chair at the foot of the throne. By this deed Kaotsou appealed to and propitiated the best feelings of the Chinese, with whom filial respect and veneration rank as the first of duties and the greatest of virtues.

Kaotsou loved splendour and sought to make his receptions and banquets imposing by their brilliance. He drew up a special ceremonial, which must have proved a trying ordeal for his courtiers, and dire was the offence if it were infringed in the smallest par-

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* Mailla, vol. ii. p. 492.

† Tai Chang Hoang.—Mailla, vol. ii. p. 496.

ticular. At the same time he hesitated to sanction the proposal of Siaoho for constructing at his new capital, Singanfoo, the magnificent palace which that general, not less skilful as a statesman and minister of public works than as the framer of a campaign, had planned for him. His hesitation was not removed until Siaoho observed that "Your Majesty should regard all the Empire as your family. If the grandeur of your palace does not correspond with that of your family, what idea will it give of its power?"* For the first time in his reign Kaotsou tasted the sweets of power during the festivities which he kept up at Singanfoo during several weeks. On one of these occasions he exclaimed, "To-day I feel I am Emperor, and perceive all the difference between a subject and his master!"

Kaotsou's attention was rudely summoned away from these trivialities by the outbreak of revolts against his authority and by inroads on the part of the Tartars. The latter were the more serious. Already has frequent allusion been made to the incursions of the tribes holding possession of the deserts to the west and north-west of the country, and it has been seen that the Princes of Tsin and the Emperor Hoangti, grappling with the difficulty in a bold manner, had done much towards remedying the evil. The disturbances that followed Hoangti's death were a fresh inducement to these clans to again gather round a common head and prey upon the weakness of

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* Mailla, vol. ii. p. 503.

China, for Kaotsou's authority was not yet recognised in many of the tributary states which had been fain to admit the supremacy of the great Tsin Emperor. About this time the Hiongnou* Tartars were governed by two chiefs in particular, one named Tonghou, the other Mehe.† Of these the former appears to have been instigated by a reckless ambition or an overweening arrogance, and at first it seemed that the forbearance of Mehe would allow his pretensions‡ to pass unchallenged. Mehe was only biding his time, however, and when Tonghou's insolence went too far he collected his followers, dispersed that prince's army, captured and executed his opponent, and took possession of his camps and pasture-grounds. Among the Hiongnou the authority of Mehe became generally recognised, and all the scattered clans followed his banner to the war.

Mehe's successes followed rapidly upon each other. Issuing from the desert, and marching in the direction of China, he wrested many fertile districts from the feeble hands of those who held them; and while establishing his personal authority on the banks of the

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* Probably, as already stated, the same race as the Huns.

† Or Mete, see Mailla.

‡ Mehe had become chief of his clan by murdering his father Teouman, who was on the point of ordering his son's assassination when thus forestalled in his intention. Tonghou sent to demand from him a favourite horse, which Mehe sent him. His kinsmen advised him to refuse compliance, but he replied, "What! would you quarrel with your neighbours for a horse?" Shortly afterwards Tonghou sent to ask for one of the wives of the former chief. This also Mehe granted, saying, "Why should we undertake a war for the sake of a woman?" It was only when Tonghou menaced his possessions that Mehe took up arms.—Mailla, vol. ii. p. 497.

Hoangho his lieutenants returned laden with plunder from expeditions into the rich provinces of Shensi and Szchuen. He won back all the territory lost by his ancestors to Hoangti and Moungtien, and he paved the way to greater success by the siege and capture of the city of Maye, thus obtaining possession of the key of the road to Tsinyang. Several of the border chiefs, and of the Emperor's lieutenants, dreading the punishment allotted in China to want of success, went over to the Tartars, and took service under Mehe.

The Emperor, fully aroused to the gravity of the danger, assembled his army, and placing himself at its head marched against the Tartars. Encouraged by the result of several preliminary encounters, the Emperor was eager to engage Mehe's main army, and after some weeks' marching and manœuvring, the two forces halted in front of each other. Kaotsou, imagining that victory was within his grasp, and believing the stories brought to him by spies of the weakness of the Tartar army, resolved on an immediate attack. He turned a deaf ear to the cautious advice of one of his generals who warned him that "in war we should never despise an enemy," and marched in person at the head of his advanced guard to find the Tartars. Mehe, who had been at all these pains to throw dust in the Emperor's eyes and to conceal his true strength, no sooner saw how well his stratagem had succeeded, and that Kaotsou was rushing into the trap so elaborately laid for him, than by a skilful movement he cut off his communications with the main body of his army, and surrounding him with an overwhelming

force, compelled him to take refuge in the city of Pingching in Shensi.

With a very short supply of provisions, and hopelessly out-numbered, it looked as if the Chinese Emperor could not possibly escape the grasp of the desert chief. In this strait one of his officers suggested as a last chance that the most beautiful virgin in the town should be discovered, and sent as a present to mollify the conqueror. Kaotsou seized at this suggestion, as the drowning man will catch at a straw, and the story is preserved, though her name has passed into oblivion, of how the young Chinese girl entered into the plan, and devoted all her wits to charming the Tartar conqueror. She succeeded as much as their fondest hopes could have led them to believe; and Mehe permitted Kaotsou, after signing an ignominious treaty, to leave his place of confinement and rejoin his army, glad to welcome the return of the Emperor, yet, without him, helpless to stir a hand to effect his release. Mehe retired to his own territory well satisfied with the material results of the war and the rich booty which had been obtained in the sack of Chinese cities, while Kaotsou, like the ordinary type of an oriental ruler, vented his discomfiture on his subordinates. The closing acts of the war were the lavishing of rewards on the head of the general to whose warnings he had paid no heed, and the execution of the scouts who had been misled by the wiles of Mehe.

The success which had attended this incursion and the spoil of war were potent inducements to the

Tartars to repeat the invasion. While Kaotsou was meditating over the possibility of revenge, and considering schemes for the better protection of his frontier, the Tartars disregarding the truce that had been concluded retraced their steps, and pillaged the border districts with impunity. In this year (B.C. 199) they were carrying everything before them, and the Emperor, either unnerved by recent disaster or appalled at the apparently irresistible energy of the followers of Mehe, remained apathetic in his palace. The representations of his ministers and generals failed to rouse him from his stupor, and the weapon to which he resorted was the abuse of his opponent, and not his prompt chastisement. Mehe was "a wicked and faithless man, who had risen to power by the murder of his father, and one with whom oaths and treaties carried no weight." In the meanwhile the Tartars were continuing their victorious career. The capital itself could not be pronounced safe from their assaults, or from the insult of their presence.

In this crisis counsels of craft and dissimulation alone found favour in the Emperor's cabinet. No voice was raised in support of the bold and only true course of going forth to meet the national enemy. The capitulation of Pingching had for the time destroyed the manhood of the race, and Kaotsou held in esteem the advice of men widely different to those who had placed him on the throne. Kaotsou opened fresh negotiations with Mehe, who concluded a treaty on the condition of the Emperor's daughter being given to him in marriage, and on the assumption that he was an

independent ruler. With these terms Kaotsou felt obliged to comply, and thus for the first time this never-ceasing collision between the tribes of the desert and the agriculturists of the plains of China closed with the admitted triumph of the former. The contest was soon to be renewed with different results, but the triumph of Mehe was beyond question.*

The weakness thus shown against a foreign foe brought its own punishment in domestic troubles. The palace became the scene of broils, plots, and counter-plots; and so badly did Kaotsou manage his affairs at this epoch that one of his favourite generals raised the standard of revolt against him through apparently a mere misunderstanding. In this instance Kaotsou easily put down the rising, but others followed which, if not pregnant with danger, were at the least extremely troublesome. The murder of Hansin, to whose aid Kaotsou owed his elevation to the throne as much as to any other, by order of the Empress, during a reception at the palace, shook confidence still more in the ruler, and many of his followers were forced into open rebellion through dread of personal danger. What wonder that, as he has said, "the very name of revolt inspired Kaotsou with apprehension."

The southern provinces of China, which had been brought under the sway of Hoangti, were at this time welded into an independent state called Nanhai. The Hans had been unable to extend their authority

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* One historian had the courage to declare that "Never was so great a shame inflicted on the Middle Kingdom, which then lost its dignity and honour."

over this region, and Kaotsou had no choice save to recognise the existence of an independent kingdom which it was extremely doubtful if he could overthrow. An envoy was sent by the Emperor to the capital of its prince, and his tact enabled him to obtain what the Chinese Emperor might flatter himself as being a recognition of his supreme authority. His ambassador on this occasion was a well-known man of letters named Loukia, and it was his representations which did most towards bringing his class into greater favour at court. Loukia, indeed, composed a work* for the special purpose of bringing Kaotsou round to enlightened ideas, and this undoubtedly exercised considerable influence on his views. In B.C. 195 we find him going out of his way to visit the tomb of Confucius, to whom he offered homage in an elaborate ceremony. This, it is expressly stated, was only an act of policy. He left it for his successors to perform the same office to the great philosopher as a tribute of belief.

During the last campaign in which he was engaged—that against Kingpou, one of his old companions and supporters—he revisited his natal spot, where he gave a grand banquet to his army. After the feast he took a musical instrument and sang in praise of the love of one's country. No truer meed has been rendered by Western poet to the necessity of patriotism than that contained in the impromptu tribute of this Chinese ruler. "Oh my friends! how delicious the feeling we

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* The "Sinyu," or new discourse, in twelve chapters.

experience when after long absence we revisit our native land! The joy of battle, the charm of glory and of earthly grandeur, nay, even the title of Emperor or of King, contain nothing so seductive; they cannot, in a well-regulated mind, stifle the love of country. The land which first nourished us has sacred claims to our gratitude. My dear fatherland! the cradle of my fortunes, it is my fondest wish that you shall possess me after my death, and that my tomb may attest how much I loved you."

Shortly after this event it became evident that the Emperor, borne down by anxiety and disturbed at the feuds with his earlier friends, was approaching his end, and one of his favourite wives made great efforts and intrigued among the nobles in order that her son should be selected the heir. But fortunately for the Empire, Kaotsou was aware of the evils of a disputed succession, and turning a deaf ear to her entreaties, his eldest son Hiaohoei was proclaimed heir-apparent. A few months before his death, Kaotsou had his first and only quarrel with the faithful Siaoho, whom on this occasion he cast into prison. Promptly advised of the injustice of his suspicions and the harshness of his treatment, he released and restored him to his former dignities, giving expression to the noteworthy sentiment that "there was nothing humiliating in the rendering of a merited act of justice."

The Emperor's indisposition had before this act of reparation assumed a grave character. The man, who boasted that he "had conquered the Empire from his saddle," was lying sick to death, because he refused

all mortal aid, saying that "If Heaven wish me to die or to live, it will inspire me what to do." His last act was to name the best officer for carrying on the government, and to instruct the Empress Liuchi what was to be done after his death, showing in those arrangements all the ability and knowledge of men which were his chief characteristics; while with his latest breath he revealed the weak side of his character by declaring that all remedies for himself were useless, and by forbidding anyone to mention them to him. He died in the fifty-third year of his age, having reigned as Emperor during eight years.

The close of his reign did not bear out all the promise of its commencement; and the extent of his authority was greatly curtailed by the disastrous effects of the war with the Tartars, and the subsequent revolts among his generals. Despite these reverses there remains much in favour of his character, and, although his reign will not compare in its achievements with that of the greatest of the Tsins, it formed a not unfavourable commencement for the famous dynasty of the Hans. The following opinion* expresses what seems to be a fair historical verdict upon his character :—

"Kaohoangti, the founder of the celebrated dynasty of the Hans, derived none of his knowledge from study; but he supplied the want by a quickness of intellect and a power of penetration far from common. Prompt, impressionable, and impetuous, his

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* Mailla, vol. ii. p. 522.

eagerness often led him into faults; but he generally knew how to repair them by deferring to the judgment of those better instructed than himself. Naturally of a good disposition, and affable in his bearing, he treated his soldiers with kindness. These manners gained him the affection of his subjects, whose happiness he always sought to promote. As soon as he found himself master of the Empire he ordered Siaoho to draw up a code of laws for the better government of the country. To Hansin he deputed the task of writing a treatise on tactics," and to other officials he gave different tasks for the benefit of the nation.

Kaotsou had performed his part in the consolidation of the Hans; it remained for those who came after him to complete what he left half-finished.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE HAN DYNASTY.

Hoeiti.—The Empress Liuchi.—Her Ambition and Aims.—Mehe, the Tartar.—A Supposititious Emperor.—Liuchi's Death.—Return of the Han Princes to Power.—Wenti proclaimed Emperor.—His Moderation and Wisdom.—The Tartars as Soldiers.—As Opponents.—Chinese Reverses.—Death of Wenti.—Kingti.—His Weakness.—A Rebellion Put Down.—Vouti.—The People of Fuhkien.—The Hoangho.—Fuhkien and Nanyuei.—The Hiongnou Tartars.—Their Incursions.—Long Wars.—A Bold Policy.—A Chinese Statesman.—Wangkue.—Szchuen.—The Yuchi.—A Chinese Quest.—Explorers.—Two Successful Generals.—Ousun.—Nanyuei.—Fuhkien Annexed.—Vouti takes field against Tartars.—A Truce.—Leaoutung and other Kingdoms Annexed.—Desertions.—Tartar Victories.—Vouti's Death and Character.—His work.

KAOTSOU was succeeded by his son Hiao Hoeiti, or Hoeiti, who, in face of formidable intrigues in the palace, made good his inheritance to his father. There had been a plan on foot for securing for his half brother Chow Wang the proud position of Emperor, and that prince's mother, the Empress Tsi, had sought to make her influence with Kaotsou turn the scale in favour of the succession of her son. If there was at first some degree of uncertainty in Hoeiti's

tenure of power it was soon removed by the energy and terrible measures of his mother, the Empress Liuchi. History has forgotten to mention the gravity of the dangers which may have threatened the position of the second ruler of the new dynasty, while it has presented in all their details the crimes or the stern preventive measures of Liuchi. We are told of the barbarous treatment which she meted out to the unfortunate Princess Tsi, and of how, having first murdered his faithful guardian, she sent the poisoned bowl to Chow Wang; but no similar light is shed on the ambitious schemes nursed by her victims or on the consequences which would have attended a less resolute mode of dealing with persons who were rebels in thought if not yet in deed. The fact remains plain that, by Liuchi's vigour, Hoeiti was saved from danger, at the same time that the Han dynasty was again placed on a firm basis.

The young Emperor, while profiting by her deeds, had both the sound sense and the goodness of heart to repudiate all complicity with them; but while he reproved his mother for acts which certainly were cruel, it does not appear that either her personal influence with him or her position at Court suffered on that account. She remained the dominant influence round the young ruler, and when the great princes came to render personal homage to their Emperor they found the Empress-mother practically wielding the sceptre and guiding the affairs of state. Among these was Tao Wang, Prince of Tsi, and when this potentate feasted with the Emperor, Liuchi not only

insisted on being present, but also on being served first to wine—a double breach of etiquette unpardonable in the eyes of any well-educated citizen of China. The Prince of Tsi could not conceal the astonishment with which he beheld anyone attempt to drink before the Emperor, and at once Liuchi marked him as her opponent and her prey. With a decision as terrible and relentless as that which characterised Lucretia Borgia, Liuchi dropped the ready poison into a goblet and offered the Prince of Tsi to drink. Happily the Emperor perceived the act and comprehended the situation at a glance. Taking the goblet, he was on the point of drinking the wine when his mother snatched it from him, thus at once confessing her crime and revealing the danger from which the Prince of Tsi had so narrowly escaped.

Hoeiti did not long enjoy the possession of the throne, and the lustre of his brief reign was due rather to the ability and integrity of his minister Tsaotsan than to any action of his own. As usually the case with those ministers whose names have been preserved in Chinese annals, Tsaotsan* showed his great qualities by endeavouring to restore order and a sense of public spirit among the official classes. In this he was fairly successful, and the remainder of this reign passed off in tranquil efforts at internal reform. The Tartar king Mehe sent an envoy to the capital; but

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* Mailla says, "He was a model for every minister who prefers the public weal to the reputation which innovations prejudicial to the people, and consequently also to the state, might gain for him."

either the form or the substance of his message enraged the Empress-mother, who ordered his execution. The two peoples were thus again brought to the brink of war, but eventually the difference was sunk for the time, and the Chinese chroniclers have represented that the satisfactory turn in the question was due to Mehe seeing the error of his ways.* Four years after this episode, and two years after the death of the minister Tsaotsan, the throne of the Hans was again vacant.

The Empress Liuchi continued to exercise the supreme power in the country, and showed no anxiety to find an heir or successor to the son whose early death she loudly deplored. Her previous plan had been to retain in her own hands as much of the governing power as possible; but now that it had become a question of keeping the Imperial seat vacant, she strove to extend and consolidate her influence by placing her brothers and near relations in great posts throughout the country. But the scheme could not be carried on without a nominal Emperor, and therefore this daring woman, stopping at nothing to attain her ends, put forward a supposititious child as the heir of her dead son. It was only the natural consequence that she should cause herself to be proclaimed Regent during the minority of her grandson.

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* Mehe's letter of excuse is thus given: "In the barbarous country which I govern both virtue and the decencies of life are unknown. I have been able to free myself from them, and therefore I blush. China has her wise men; that is a happiness which I envy. They would have prevented my being wanting in the respect due to your rank."

However much the ministers of the late Emperor might deplore the turn of events which had placed the destiny of China in the hands of a woman, they were incapable of changing it; and from the general content among the people it may be inferred that Liu-chi governed the country without unduly stretching the supreme authority she had usurped. Years passed on, and the nominal Emperor, whose supposed mother had been murdered because she was not sufficiently compliant with Liuchi's will, was growing up to man's estate. He had given signs of the possession of ability, and there were reports of his having used threats of an intention to avenge his mother's death. These hasty words were duly carried to Liuchi, who, prompt as ever, caused the young ruler to be shut up in the palace prison. Without even the form of trial or an attempt at justification the Empress got rid of this inconvenient puppet, and set about choosing a successor who should be a more elastic instrument in her hands.

There were not wanting signs, however, that this state of things could not long continue. The discontent among the official classes was widespread, and the indignation of the nobles at the elevation of Liuchi's family intense, and portentous of a coming storm. One great chief had even gone so far as to declare that "he recognised neither Emperor nor Empress," and the reviving courage of the family of the great Kaotsou gave consistency to the plan formed for the overthrow of Liuchi. Perils were gathering round this resolute woman, but we know not whether

she would have succumbed to them, when the whole question was settled by her sudden death. Walking in her palace one day meditating upon how she could best overcome her numerous opponents, she was suddenly confronted, the story goes, by the apparition of a hideous monster surrounded by the victims of her restless ambition, and died from the effects of the fright produced by a too late consciousness of her crimes. Deprived of the commanding abilities of the Empress-mother the faction of Liuchi did not at once abandon the ambitious dreams which they had cherished and partially realised by means of her energy. But they were fighting for a lost cause, and most of them perished vainly attempting to defend the palace against the army collected for their destruction by the leading princes of the Han family. With the death of the great Empress it may be said that they sank back into their former station, and that the Hans recovered the authority of which they had been temporarily deprived by the energy of a woman.

The successful princes had then to select from among themselves one to be put forward and acknowledged as Emperor, a task often the most difficult for a confederacy. In this instance the dangers of the situation were fortunately avoided, and although the Prince of Tsi had done most for the cause, the claims of the Prince of Tai, an illegitimate son of Kaotsou, were allowed to be superior to and more promising for the public weal than those of any other candidate. Tai took the name of Hiao Wenti on ascending the throne, and his first acts were to appoint

able and honest ministers, and to exempt his subjects from one year's taxes. The country, having recently passed through a period of anxiety on the score of a disputed succession, was greatly desirous that all risk of the recurrence of a similar danger should be averted, and although Wenti wished to escape the responsibility, his ministers were firm on the point that he should name an heir. Nor would they agree to his proposition that either his uncle or his brother was the fittest man in the realm to be his successor; and then was waged in China the grand controversy, which has been carried on in every country at some period of its history, of whether a man's best heirs are his collateral representatives or his direct descendants—a question settled in favour of the latter in every state where there has been progress, not stagnation, and civilisation and freedom instead of barbarousness and chains. And so it was finally settled in China on this occasion. Wenti's eldest son Lieouki was proclaimed heir-apparent, with all the formality due to the auspicious ceremony.*

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* Among other acts may be quoted the following edict, remarkable for its humanity and sympathy with the wants of a great and industrious people: "Spring is the season when all nature renews herself. The trees and the fields put on a new aspect; the animals seem to be born again, and everything, even to inanimate things, announces, and breathes with joy. Among the peoples entrusted to my charge it cannot be that there are none in want, or infirm, or aged. If I, whom they ought to regard as their father and mother, do not comfort them I should be wanting in my duties. Let the Mandarins, each in his own district, make, therefore, exact enquiries as to those who are worthy of my paternal solicitude, and provide for their wants out of the public funds. If the old men have no silk to cover them, if they are in need of nourishment to sustain and repair their exhausted strength, they suffer from cold and

The new ruler soon had occasion to show address in his dealings with some of the greater of his vassals. The Prince of Nanyuei,* to the south of China, had taken to himself a style and mode of life which showed that he aspired to be an independent potentate, and affairs reached such a pass that Wenti found it impossible to overlook them. He resolved to attain his ends, if possible, without resorting to force. He sent a special envoy charged with a letter of remonstrance to the Court of this prince, also bestowing favours on some of his relatives resident within the Chinese frontier. After pointing out to him the consequences of his unfriendly and defiant conduct, he asked what result could he expect were the Emperor to collect against him "all the forces of China?" In the paragraph following comes the enunciation of the threat—proved an infallible truth in so many subsequent campaigns by Chinese soldiers—that few barriers are really insurmountable. "Know," wrote the Emperor, "that there are few insurmountable barriers, and that a prince is no longer invincible when he ceases to be guided by virtue." This diplomacy gained its object; the Prince of Nanyuei, admitting

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hunger! How can I expect from them either devotion or obedience? I order that all old men of eighty years or under (thereabouts?) shall be provided each month with corn, meat and wine in sufficient quantities for all their necessities. My intention is that silk and cotton are to be given in addition to all those who are more than eighty years of age. With regard to punishment, I wish that for the future the crime of the children should not fall upon their fathers and mothers, nor upon their family."—Mailla, vol. ii. p. 541.

* The modern province of Kwantung and parts of several other provinces.

the faults with which he had been charged, returned to his allegiance, and abandoned those dreams of ambition which he had indulged while the Hans were engrossed in their struggle with the faction of Liuchi.

In all his arrangements Wenti proved himself a practical man, and one well qualified to carry on a great organisation. He had originally shown himself diffident of his capacity to rule a great Empire, but having accepted the charge he devoted all his energy to the task and summoned to his assistance the wisest ministers to be procured.

Under his auspices a great revival of letters took place, and it again became the proudest privilege of a Chinese subject to be ranked among the literati of the country. In nothing was the moderation of Wenti more clearly shown than by the edict which he issued abrogating the law which had been passed by the great Hoangti, forbidding anyone to criticise the form of government. As Wenti very truly said in this "glorious edict," to maintain such a law was to deprive the sovereign of one of the most valuable sources of his information, and to keep him in ignorance of the true mind of his people.* The significance of this act is but little enhanced by the fact, remarkable though it be, that at a later period he reprimanded his officials because in the public prayers they asked for his exclusive happiness rather than for that of his sub-

* Few rulers have had the moral courage and prudence to recognise this truth, never more forcibly expressed than in "the glorious edict," as Pauthier styles it, of this Chinese Emperor of the second century before our era. For the terms of the edict and Kanghi's comments upon it, see Pauthier's work, p. 238.

jects. His efforts for the improvement of agriculture and for the reclamation of waste lands were equally strenuous and crowned with the success they deserved. He gave no encouragement to any in his Empire to lead either an idle or a useless life, and he set an example which he expected the highest and the meanest of his officials to imitate. Among his other acts it only remains to say that he permitted throughout the Empire the coinage of money, which had hitherto been the monopoly of the capital, thus placing great facilities in the way of those engaged in commerce.

The manner in which justice was dispensed under his supervision would furnish a theme as much to his praise as any of his other acts. It was a maxim of his reign that punishment was awarded under laws common to both subject and prince, and that to vary them in deference to the power of the ruler would be to introduce confusion into the state, and to instigate many to violate them—a maxim worthy, it may be said, of our Chief Justice Gascoigne. At the same time Wenti was not wholly free from some of the severity of the national character, and when a culprit violated his father's tomb and was condemned to death, Wenti did not consider that the execution of the offender atoned for the wrong done to the family honour. He wished that his family should be destroyed; but on the remonstrance of a minister he decreed that only the wrong-doer should receive punishment. At a later period he abolished mutilation, hitherto the most common sentence in China's criminal code, and it was found that the execution of the laws was quite as

effectual, although the punishments had been deprived of much of their terror. It was the peculiar boast of Wenti's life that after he had been on the throne for a few years there were not "four hundred criminals" in all the gaols of the realm.*

The death of the Tartar king Mehe, who has already been mentioned as having had relations with the Chinese government, revived the questions connected with the far west. His son Lao Chang succeeded to his authority, and one of his first acts was to propose the renewal of the truce with China and to ask for a Chinese princess in marriage. Wenti, ever desirous of treading the pleasant paths of peace, willingly complied, and for a brief space it seemed as if Lao Chang would prove as well-behaved a neighbour as Mehe had latterly been. But this anticipation was soon found to be a vain hope. The Tartars showed no inclination to conform with the terms of the truce, and began to renew their raids within the Chinese frontier. Even then Wenti was loth to declare war upon them, and it was only after the tribes of the desert had wrought much mischief that he could be induced to take up the sword for their chastisement. It would be a mistake to suppose from this that Wenti was a pusillanimous prince. He well knew the difficulty of conducting a war with the Tartars to a successful conclusion, and wished to avoid by all the means in his power a collision with a people whom he could not subdue, and yet whom, unsubdued, he knew would

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* The population of China at this period is computed to have been about one hundred millions.

always remain a bitter and perhaps an irreclaimable foe. At length, however, the Tartars proceeded so far in their hostility that Wenti gave orders for an army to be sent against them.

At a grand council of war held for the purpose the various modes of carrying on operations against the Tartars were discussed, and prominent among them was a proposition—afterwards carried into practice—of raising a force from those Tartars who had become Chinese subjects for the special service of protecting the western frontier. This scheme was found to answer admirably, and may be considered the first occasion on which the Chinese government incorporated in its army a military force composed of an alien race.* Some few years after this decree (about the year

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* The results of this council are given in a memorial which was adopted, too interesting and instructive not to be quoted: "When a nation has enemies so close to them as these Tartars it is necessary to provide for three things. The first is, to fortify its frontiers; the second, to protect them with warlike and well-disciplined troops; the third, to establish along the frontier arsenals furnished with arms of proof. We also read in treatises on the art of war that 'to fight without having good arms is to deliver oneself into the hands of the enemy, and that generals who wish to give battle with bad soldiers ought to make up their minds to lose it.' Officers without experience lay the prince open to the risk of perishing, while the prince who does not know how to choose good officers exposes his state to certain ruin. To know one's enemy, his strength and his country is still a point essential to the conduct of military operations. The Tartar manner of making war is very different to ours. To climb up and to descend the steepest mountains with astonishing rapidity; to swim across the deepest torrents and rivers; to be able to bear the sufferings of the wind, rain, hunger and thirst; to make forced marches, not being checked even by precipices; to accustom their horses to pass over the narrowest paths; to make themselves skilful in the management of the bow and arrow; to be proficient in their physical exercises; all these are military qualifications among the Tartars.

B.C. 166) the Tartar king headed a great expedition into China. The invaders were computed to number nearly one hundred and fifty thousand horsemen, and for a considerable distance within the frontier they carried everything before them. On the approach of an army sent by the Emperor they adopted sound tactics and retreated with their booty. Eight years later they renewed the attempt, on two occasions, with equal success, but in the meantime Lao Chang, their chief, had died. He was succeeded by his son Kiunchin. The Chinese forces appear to have been ill-suited for coping with them, and the Tartars harried the country almost to the gates of the capital.

They attack, take to flight and rally with a promptitude and a degree of facility worthy of our admiration. In gorges and defiles they will always have the advantage over us; but in open country, where our chariots can easily perform their evolutions, our cavalry will always prove superior to theirs. Their bows have not the same strength as ours; their lances are shorter, and their cuirasses and arms of an inferior temper, and in close contact they will be unable to withstand the impetuosity of our troops. To stand in firm array, to fight with the naked weapon, to handle the pike, to present front, to open out when surrounded—these are the proper manœuvres of our troops, and these the Tartars, being ignorant of them, would be unable to resist. Therefore, taking everything into consideration, five of our soldiers may be considered as a match for three of theirs. In order to touch upon the actual question before us, we have several thousand Tartars subject to our rule, and their method of fighting is identical with that of the Hiongnou, as they are of the same race. We must give them arms manufactured by ourselves, and chariots of war with which soldiers of recognised bravery will be equipped. They will quickly learn the Tartar plan of war, and, like them, will be able to support all fatigues. We shall thus have Chinese subjects who will become Tartar soldiers, and will form a body of troops experienced in their plan of fighting, guarding our frontiers, and they will defend them against the insults of these restless and plunder-loving neighbours of ours."—Mailla, vol. ii. p p. 555–556.

The chagrin produced by these disasters told heavily on the health of an Emperor always desirous of his people's happiness and welfare. After ruling the Empire wisely and with beneficial results to his subjects during twenty-three years, Wenti died (B.C. 156) at the early age of forty-six, leaving to his son who succeeded him a brilliant example of a prince who set the public weal high above the gratification of his own personal pleasure. If there had been any doubt as to the triumph of the Hans proving permanent or ephemeral, the virtue of Wenti decided the point, and the later Emperors of his House following very much in his footsteps, the Han dynasty took its place as one of the most popular which ever ruled the Chinese nation.

Wenti's son on ascending the throne took the name of Hiaokingti, or Kingti, and in his first acts he closely imitated his father. Probably this must be attributed as much to the advice of his experienced ministers as to his own disposition. It is certain that while in the first days of his reign he remitted taxes, and extended the merciful consideration of new sovereigns to criminals undergoing the penalty of the laws, he very shortly afterwards imposed a fresh tax, and one, moreover, which had been waived by Wenti. This caused some discontent; but, on the other hand, his moderation in the dispensation of the law, and the further alleviation of the penalty of flogging, which Wenti had substituted for mutilation, secured him the favourable opinion of the mass of his subjects. On the whole, Kingti proved himself a weak if an amiable prince.

On one occasion, however, his irresolution cost the life of one of his most devoted and skilful ministers. A league of princes had been formed for the purpose of advancing private ends that need not be particularised, and Chaotsou, the wisest of the Emperor's ministers, had been selected as the special object of their enmity. It was said that, were Chaotsou executed, the rebels would disperse, and in a weak moment Kingti sacrificed Chaotsou, just as our Charles abandoned Strafford. Of course the rebels were only encouraged by this unwise concession to their illegal action, and raised their demands because of this evidence of the weakness of the king.

Kingti then sent a large army against them, and attacked the forces of the rebel princes from three sides; and his commander succeeded by a series of skilful manœuvres in shutting them up in their camp.* In the struggle which then took place craft met craft, and at length the rebels, fighting with all the courage of despair, strove to cut their way through the ring of enemies around them. At first their onset was successful, but the Chinese reserves coming up the whole army was destroyed. All the princes, save one, were either slain or sent as prisoners to Changnan, where they were executed. The remaining years of Kingti's reign were uneventful. The Tartars did not greatly disturb the border, and when Kingti died (in B.C. 141) he left the record of sixteen more years of almost unvaried tranquillity to the history of the

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* Refer to Mailla, vol. ii. p. 581.

period. The Chinese nation had turned these years of peace to the best use, and were at this time in a high state of prosperity and material strength. By the successful intrigues of his mother, Lieouchi had been, some years before Kingti's death, proclaimed heir apparent in preference to his elder brother, Lieou-yong, and now on his father's decease he became Emperor by the name of Hanwouti, or Vouti.

When Vouti began his reign he was only sixteen years of age, but one of his earliest resolutions was to raise his country to a higher point of splendour than it had yet reached, and he took an early opportunity of inviting the opinion of the ministers and other learned men as to the means to be employed for the attainment of his object. The gist of their observations may be taken as expressed in the line that "the principles of Government did not consist in fine words or studied speeches, but in actions." Vouti's efforts towards consolidating his government were retarded and thrown back by the intrigues of his mother who was a patron and supporter of the Taouist sect, and several of his foremost ministers, having incurred her resentment, were either executed or dismissed the service of the state. Five years afterwards the Empress-mother died in consequence, it would appear, of injuries received during a great fire at the palace, and then Vouti reinstated some of these ministers in their former offices.

Vouti's first anxiety was caused by the outbreak of a war between two Chinese princes, and, when the weaker appealed to him for assistance against the

aggressive neighbour, his ministers gave opposite counsel as to whether the request should be complied with or refused. One minister, dwelling on the well-known turbulence of the people of Yuei—the modern Fuhkien—insisted that it would be foolish for the Emperor to take part in a quarrel from which he could reap no advantage. Another, Chwangtsou, took however the opposite view, and pointed out that the Emperor could not be considered the father of his people if he turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of the weaker of his subjects. Convinced by this latter argument Vouti resolved to extend his protection to the afflicted, and entrusted the operation to Chwangtsou in person. On the approach of the Imperial troops the aggressors retired into the difficult country behind the marshes and lagoons of Fuhkien, where Chwangtsou conceived it to be prudent to leave them undisturbed. The campaign could only be considered in the light of a failure were it to conclude without securing permanent safety for those who had suffered from the incursions of the men of Yuei, and Chwangtsou accordingly obtained the sanction of the Emperor to their transfer to a district further removed from the borders of Fuhkien. The subjection of Yuei was left for a later day.

The country had in the meantime been afflicted by a great catastrophe, bringing in its train a famine, and such suffering to millions as is only known to the packed populations of China and India. The mighty river Hoangho, which is to the provinces of Northern China what the Kiang is to the south and centre, burst

its banks, and flooded for hundreds of miles around the flat and low-lying country of Shensi and Kansuh. In face of this appalling calamity the utmost effort of man could accomplish little, and when the waters had abated the population fell victims to the dearth which ensued. Since that time the overflowing of the Hoangho has been periodic, and from some cause, which has never been thoroughly ascertained, that splendid river has never performed the useful functions that might be expected from it. Its gigantic course is clearly traceable on the map, but in the reality of fact it lies across Northern China deprived of half its strength and half its utility.

The surrender of the Prince of Nanyuei, and his recognition of the Emperor's authority have been already described. He was in some way threatened at this time by the turbulent people of Yuei,* whose raids have been referred to, but instead of at once taking up arms for their chastisement, he asked the Emperor for advice and assistance. The local governors were instructed to take the necessary steps to comply with this demand, and the Prince of Nanyuei was encouraged to proceed to extremities. There is some reason for taking the view that these measures were put into force as a cloak for the design Vouti had formed of incorporating Yuei with the Empire. His true mind seems reflected in the following sentence from a memorial of the day: "that although

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* The northern Yuei, or Fuhkien, was called Minyuei to distinguish it from Nanyuei.

Yuei never has belonged, it beyond doubt should belong to the Chinese Empire." The doubts suggested in another very able memorial, "Is the conquest of these barbarians worth the loss of the many thousand faithful subjects, which it must inevitably entail?" were never seriously discussed, when the object before the government was the acquisition of a kingdom. The Prince of Nanyuei cast aside his inactivity the instant he found that Vouti approved of his entering the field, and marched his troops into Yuei simultaneously with the advance of the Chinese generals. The war was brought to a speedy and a bloodless conclusion. The people of Yuei refused to oppose an invader who was resolved to crush all resistance regardless of loss, and the brother of the king, playing the part of the most devoted patriot, slew the ruler, and sent his head to the Chinese commanders. Peace then ensued, on the footing of Yuei becoming a tributary province, over which Yuchen, the fratricide, was placed in authority.

In the sixth year of Vouti's reign (B.C. 135) the Tartar king sent an envoy to ask for a Chinese princess in marriage, and to express a desire for the continuance of the truce between the peoples. These periodical missions had as often as otherwise proved the precursor of war; but whatever the result the main object of their mission had generally been granted. But a new feeling was springing up among Chinese statesmen on the subject of the Tartars. Their experience had taught them that however much the desert chiefs might promise to keep the peace they had not the power, perhaps not the inclination, to

restrain the impulse of their subjects, and they were at last beginning to recognise that no useful purpose could be served by closing their eyes to their experience, and by assuming improbabilities because pleasing. So it was that in the Grand Council assembled by Vouti for the consideration of the request of the Tartar king, the party advocating the rejection of the demand, and the adoption of stringent measures against the Tartars, took up a bolder position, but the time had not yet come when their views were to prevail. The bold policy of Wang Kue, who had had personal experience of the state of affairs on the Western border, "of destroying them rather than to remain constantly exposed to their insults," was not yet to be accepted, and the Tartars were granted one more opportunity of shaping their action towards the Chinese on a friendly basis. The difficulties of a campaign in the wilds of Central Asia appeared to the peaceful Chinese to be insuperable, and as yet their experience had not afforded them any reason to believe that the subjection of the Hiongnou could be accomplished.

Wang Kue* had no intention of abandoning what may be accurately styled his pet project, and he endeavoured to bring Vouti round to his way of thinking by his personal address, and by working on the esteem in which the Emperor held him. The defeat of Han Kaotsou many years before, by the Tartars, was used as an argument in favour of their views by both parties;

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* From a statement in Mailla, vol. iii. p. 22, it might be inferred that, to forward his views, he adopted the modern fashion of "popular agitation."

while Vouti studiously abstained from expressing an opinion one way or the other. Another Grand Council was summoned, and Wang Kue's argument that the defeat at Pingching should be retrieved proved more convincing than the contrary theory that was advanced of Kaotsou having, by his subsequent inaction, admitted that the attempt should not be made because it could not possibly succeed. Vouti closed the conference by deciding that war was to be declared. A great army was collected for the purpose, and Wang Kue, with four lieutenants under him, assumed the chief command.

Wang Kue had thus attained his heart's desire, but he was doomed to disappointment. The policy which was good and sound enough on paper was to be made to appear unwise if not ridiculous by the hard logic of facts. In every country and at all ages a daring and a prescient policy can only be proved to be justifiable by attaining success. If its development is marred by disaster, its conclusion is shorn of its anticipated proportions; the public voice will infallibly condemn it, and in most cases history agrees with the decision. There is much force in the argument that dangers that can be foreseen should be promptly grappled with and nipped in the bud, but the statesman must submit to the only test that will be applied to his measures—their success, or their failure. Such has been the case sometimes in the annals of European nations, so it was on the occasion we are discussing with Wang Kue, the Chinese statesman and general. The army, computed to number three hundred thou-

sand men, was concentrated in the vicinity of the frontier, and Wang Kue resorted to a carefully devised stratagem for the purpose of enticing the Tartars within his reach. In this he failed. The Tartars eluded all his efforts to attack them, and the campaign closed ingloriously without result. When Vouti learnt the failure of the project he ordered the arrest of his ambitious but unlucky general, who, wisely accepting the inevitable, put an end to his existence. Thus perished Wang Kue, the originator of China's aggressive policy towards the West, and the first leader of an army charged with the task of subduing Central Asia. Unfortunate for himself, his great idea took root and became in course of time incorporated with the national policy.

A short lull ensued in the Tartar war, and Vouti employed all his resources in extending his Empire towards the south. The brief campaign in Fuhkien had served to create a breach between the Empire and the ruler of Nanyuei, whose protestations of fidelity were received with more incredulity than good will. Chinese envoys were sent to explore his territories and to examine into the practices of his court, and these were in turn followed by Chinese generals instructed to subdue and annex the countries skirting and, in a military sense, commanding the districts of Nanyuei. Having vanquished the resistance of the mountaineers of Western Szchuen Vouti's lieutenants employed them in constructing roads through the most difficult parts of that region, and by this measure the greater portion of

Szchuen was made a Chinese province, and Nanyuei became isolated and outflanked. The new possession was divided by Vouti into twelve departments, and took its place for the first time in history as an integral portion of the Chinese Empire. Similar events were occurring in other quarters of the country, and several princes, after being deposed, had to esteem themselves fortunate in the loss of nothing more than their states. Others, such as the King of Wei,* anticipated the inevitable by a timely surrender, so that on all sides and from a variety of causes there was a tendency to promote the union of China.

The effect of the failure and disgrace of Wang Kue had been to inspire the Tartars with fresh courage and audacity. The war once begun they prosecuted it after their own fashion with the greatest vigour. Their raids became more incessant and more daring, and in the skirmishes which ensued with the Chinese forces they were more often victorious than not. Six years (B.C. 127) after the death of Wang Kue they entered Kansuh and Shensi† for the third time since the accession of Vouti. It was then that Vouti had recourse to the slower and more extensive plan of forming military settlements in Shensi as a bulwark in that quarter, and of improving the roads from the interior to this extremity of the country.

The Hiongnou Tartars had during these years been prosecuting a war with a people to the south of their territory—a contest which, some time before

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* A portion of the modern Manchuria.
† Soufang, or Ninghiawei in particular.

Vouti made these strenuous preparations on his western borders, reached a conclusion, and one fraught with important consequences to the peoples of the neighbouring states. That tract of country, which on the modern map includes the north-western portion of Kansuh, Kokonor, and a considerable part of the southern half of Gobi, was then inhabited by a people called Yuchi or Yueti. Lanchefoo and Shachow were towns in their possession, and they acknowledged a king of their own race. Numerous and prosperous as they were, they were no match for the hardier Hiongnou, and in the year B.C. 165 they were not only defeated but compelled to quit their homes, and to seek elsewhere the independence which they were unable to maintain. The Yuchi* retreated along the Tian Shan range to the countries of Trans-Oxiana, where they coalesced with those other warlike tribes which a few centuries later overran the Roman Empire. When the tale of the discomfiture of this people was brought to Vouti, he loudly expressed his commiseration with their hard fate, and turning to his council he asked, in the spirit of Arthur proposing a quest to his knights, if there were any sufficiently adventurous to follow these wanderers and bring them back. With the promptitude of a Galahad, Chang Keen volunteered to make the attempt, and to track from one end of Asia to the other the relics of this unfortunate race.

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* The Yuchi were probably allied with the Jats, who about this time founded an important kingdom in Hindostan. They were overthrown by the celebrated Vikrama Ditya, B.C. 56.

Chang Keen set out on his adventurous journey accompanied by one hundred devoted companions, but on his entering the country of the Hiongnou they were all made prisoners. The story affirms that they were kept in a state of confinement during ten years, and that they then managed to make good their escape, and to continue their journey in search of the Yuchi. After visiting many of the western countries they reached that of the Yuchi with whom they lived for one year. They then returned to China bringing back a large stock of information concerning the peoples of the other Asiatic kingdoms, but of all Chang Keen's companions only two survived. Chang Keen drew up a memorial describing what he had seen, and throwing light on the geography of Asia. Among the most important of his observations is that insisting on the advantages of the short land route to India through Szchuen, which was, as we have seen, gradually falling into the hands of the Emperor. Vouti then sent several exploring parties in this direction, but they fared badly at the hands of the people beyond the frontier. One party succeeded in penetrating into Yunnan, but another was ignominiously turned back before it had passed the borders of Shensi.*

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* There is some difference of opinion as to the exact date of the expulsion of the Yuchi by the Hiongnou. It was not until many years after its occurrence that Vouti sent to recall them to their homes. In any case, they preferred their new-found security to the chances of a fresh struggle, even though supported by the Chinese ruler, with the Hiongnou. M. Pauthier has told in vigorous language how, several centuries later, the descendants of the Yuchi and the Hiongnou combined precipitated themselves

Meanwhile the war with the Tartars was far from languishing. Encouraged by what they considered the weakness of the Chinese they renewed their incursions and carried them further than before into the heart of the western provinces. Inflated by their success, the Tartars cast aside some of their habitual caution in war, and they were taken at a disadvantage by a general whom Vouti had sent with instructions to come to an engagement wherever he might find them. The Tartars fought with the courage of despair, and their king, with the greater number of his troops, cut a way through the Chinese forces. But he left his camp, baggage, wives, children and more than fifteen thousand soldiers in the hands of Wei Tsing the Chinese general. This great victory was the most effective blow which had yet been dealt by the Chinese in their long wars with the Hiongnou, and Wei Tsing became the hero of the age. Honours were showered upon him, and when he returned to the capital Vouti went out a day's journey to meet and welcome him. A few months after this victory Wei Tsing again engaged the Tartar army, and, although the result remained doubtful, the general confirmed by his skill and intrepidity the good opinions he had already won.

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against the nations of the West. It may be interesting, while on this subject, to remark that shortly after the Yuchi had established themselves in Central Asia they came into collision with the Parthians, whom they vanquished after a bitterly-contested struggle of several years. Other bands of Yuchi, or Scythians, attacked and destroyed the Greek kingdom of Bactria, one of the last relics of the conquests of Alexander. (Pauthier, pp. 242-243; De Guigne's Mem. de Litter., t. xxv. p. 24.)

The most important result of these successes was that the Chinese recovered the confidence which a succession of Tartar victories had impaired. Hitherto they had stood always on the defensive, but they felt it was now time to assume the offensive. Vouti's council approved of the proposal to carry the war into the enemy's country. An expedition was accordingly fitted out and the command entrusted to Hokiuping, an experienced officer. It consisted mostly of cavalry. The Tartars were taken completely by surprise when they found the Chinese adopting their own tactics, and offered but little resistance. Hokiuping carried everything before him, and having traversed an extensive portion of the Hiongnou territory returned to China, with a vast quantity of booty, including the golden images used by one of the Tartar princes in his religious ceremonies. Shortly after this adventure Hokiuping repeated it with a larger force, and with increased success. He advanced as far as Sopouomo* in the desert, and on his return boasted that "thirty thousand Tartars" had perished by the sword of his warriors. A great outcry arose among the Hiongnou that these disasters had fallen upon them through the incompetence of their princes, and the wish for, if not the intention to carry out, a rough justice for their demerits was loudly expressed. The two princes inculpated took alarm at these threats, and a large number of their followers made a voluntary surrender

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* Sopouomo, then called Kiuyen is near the eastern portion of the Tian Shan.

to Vouti. At first Vouti was disposed to receive them with great state, but being better advised by his ministers he ordered them to be disarmed on crossing the frontier, and to be dispersed in settlements throughout the border provinces.

The expeditions of Hokiuping were only intended as the forerunners of an invasion on a large scale of the Hiongnou country. A considerable army, divided into two brigades, was collected, and the generals Wei Tsing and Hokiuping were each appointed to the command of one of these. Both advanced boldly into the desert, and fought the Tartars in several engagements on its northern side. The Chinese appear to have been uniformly successful, and to have inflicted much loss on the Hiongnou; but they did not return from their campaign in the desert without having themselves suffered some loss both in men and horses. The Tartars also were only cowed for the time, and not permanently overthrown. Shortly after this war, in which he had taken so prominent a part, Hokiuping died. He was the most popular of all the generals with the private soldiers, who marched with confidence under his orders because he always vanquished the enemy. As his countrymen naively put it, his loss was the greater because he never suffered a check, and on that ground they claim for him a place among the great captains of his time.*

Chang Keen, whose adventurous journey has been already mentioned, was entrusted about this time with

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* Mailla, vol. iii. p. 51.

a diplomatic mission to the court of the neighbouring kingdom of Ousun.* At one time this prince had been tributary to the Hiongnou, but he had shaken off their yoke, and was now an independent king. Chang Keen was sanguine enough to expect that this prince, rejoicing in his new-found liberty, would raise no objection to becoming the vassal of Vouti; but in this view he was disappointed. Chang Keen resided some time in Ousun, where he was honourably entertained, and from this place he sent explorers into the surrounding countries, both to the south and also to the north. Vouti, on learning that Chang Keen had failed in the main object of his mission, caused two fortified cities to be built on the Shensi frontier, thus affording protection to the traders who were beginning to carry on commercial relations with the peoples of this region, at the same time that he provided against possible contingencies in future wars with the Tartar tribes. By this step he cut off the communications between the Hiongnou and the peoples of the Kiang Valley. It was well that he did so, for his struggle with the former was on the point of being renewed. In the year B.C. 114 the Tartar king died, and his son Ouwei succeeded him; but the contest was for a brief space postponed in consequence of the exhaustion of the Tartars, and of Vouti's attention being engaged by other matters which cannot be passed over without some notice.

The war with the people of Fuhkien, when the Prince of Nanyuei was relieved from his embarrass-

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* Ousun was a state south of Kokonor.

ment, has already been described, and the relations of that principality with the Emperor remained fairly satisfactory during the lifetime of Prince Chowhow, but his son and successor indulged excesses which speedily led to his death. There then ensued a period of disturbance which finally broke into open war, and Vouti, seeing that the time had come to assert his authority, put forward his claims to the possession of Nanyuei. The Imperial troops entered the province from four sides, stamped out all resistance, and conquered the province which was thereupon divided into nine departments. The province of Fuhkien at last shared the same fate. Its inhabitants were carried away, and it was converted into a vast desert. These two wars occupied Vouti's attention during four years, but they left him much stronger within his frontier, and able to devote his full attention to foreign affairs.

It was, therefore, with increased confidence and strength that the Chinese commenced the new Tartar war (B.C. 110). For the first time Vouti took the field in person, although the active command was divided between twelve lieutenant-generals. Having assembled a large army of nearly two hundred thousand men in Shensi, Vouti sent an ambassador to the Tartar chief calling upon him to surrender all prisoners and plunder, and to recognise China as the dominant country in Eastern Asia. The Tartar's only reply was to imprison the ambassador, and to hurl his defiance at the head of the Emperor, who, for some reason that it is now impossible to discover, refrained from prosecuting the campaign on this

occasion, making instead a grand tour through the northern and central districts of his dominions. One of the last acts of the year was the reincorporation of the northern province of Leaoutung, which, after the fall of the Tsins, had been permitted to acquire for a time its former independence. This result was not attained without some difficulty, but it was attained ; and the difficulty and the loss counted even then for little in the eyes of Chinese statesmen so long as the result was satisfactory.

At the same time that Vouti was engaged in the far north in reducing to his sway the country beyond the Peiho, his generals were prosecuting similar enterprises with ardour in the southern territory of Yunnan. There also the Chinese were completely successful. Yunnan was reduced to the condition of a Chinese province, and its king had the good sense to accept, with an appearance of grace, the smaller dignity of a Chinese governor. The Chinese then turned their arms against the small kingdom of Cherchen situated beyond the western mountains of Szchuen. The Chinese general on advancing with a small force to reconnoitre the capital was attacked by the king at the head of his army. The Chinese not only repulsed the attack, but pressing their advantage home entered the city simultaneously with the vanquished. The garrison then surrendered, and the king was sent prisoner to Changnan.* The neighbouring states, awed by this brilliant success, voluntarily

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* The old name of Singanfoo.

admitted their dependence upon China, and their liability to pay tribute. With one exception, in the case of the kingdom of Tawan, this result was attained without either loss or any untoward occurrence. This state, famous for its breed of horses, had in several ways evinced hostile sentiments, and its ruler had distinctly refused to hold any commercial relations with the Chinese. The murder of Chinese merchants brought on a crisis, and Vouti ordered a small force to proceed under the command of one of his brothers-in-law to exact reparation. Unfortunately for the Chinese, this scion of the Imperial family proved a very incapable commander. Outmanœuvred by his more astute antagonist, he and his force, attenuated by famine and losses in the field, were obliged to retire into a fortified city where they hoped to make good their position until relief came. It was not for some time that Vouti was able to send any reinforcements, and when they arrived, although his relative Li Kwangli was relieved and Tawan subjected, the difficult nature of the campaign was shown by the severe losses incurred by Vouti's army.

In the meanwhile everything was subservient in Vouti's mind to the necessity of chastising the Tartars, and preparations for a final campaign were in active progress. The Hiongnou were far from being united among themselves, and at one moment a plan had been formed for a Tartar general to declare himself an ally of the Chinese on the appearance of their army. The dilatoriness of the Chinese commander gave time for the Tartar king to discover this arrange

ment, and while his lieutenant was meditating over his act of treachery, the order was given for his execution. Nor did the misfortunes of the campaign end here. Ousselou, the Tartar chief, promptly followed up this blow by attacking with overwhelming numbers the advanced guard of the Chinese army, which he destroyed to a man; and while the Chinese commander-in-chief remained inactive on another part of the frontier, Ousselou marched through Shensi, putting the inhabitants to the sword, and giving towns and hamlets to the flames. The Emperor was advised to leave these fierce and turbulent neighbours alone, but the advice was not palatable to him, and he continued his warlike preparations. The death of Ousselou, in the moment of his triumph, removed the pressing danger, and left Vouti time to perfect his arrangements. In B.C. 101 Vouti announced his formal intention of attacking the Tartars in order to exact retribution for the insults offered to the national dignity, for, as he said, "chastisement does not become the less deserved because tardy." The new Tartar king showed some symptoms of a desire for a pacific settlement, and negotiations of a semi-formal character were begun between him and the Chinese. Neither party was remarkable for good faith, and, after some months passed in attempting to get the better of each other, the usual climax was reached. The Chinese envoys were placed in confinement, and a fresh rupture went to swell the long list of grievances that had already been accumulated. Vouti's arms were again destined to defeat, partly through the incompetence, a

second time demonstrated, of Li Kwangli, who had been entrusted by the Emperor with the command. The Chinese army was virtually destroyed on this occasion after a brave resistance. It became of the greatest moment that this disaster should be promptly retrieved, and Liling, Li Kwangli's grandson, volunteered to accomplish the task. He marched into the Tartar country with a small force, won one battle by the superior skill of his archers, fought a second with indecisive result, but was worsted in a third. Fighting valiantly he strove to make good his way back to China; but harassed throughout his march, and surrounded by vastly superior numbers, he thought discretion the better part of valour, and laid down his arms. Not content with this, he came to the decision, by a line of argument difficult for one of our customs to appreciate, that it was more in consonance with his honour to take service with the victor than to return to the presence of his own prince as a vanquished general.* The very next enterprise which Vouti attempted against the Tartars fared as badly at their hands, and proof was afforded that Liling had done as much in his campaign as it was in human resolution and capacity to perform. In the year B.C. 90, when Vouti had been engaged for fifty years in constant war with the Tartars, Li Kwangli was

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* Ssematsien, the historian of the age, whom M. Abel de Remusat has styled the Chinese Herodotus, sought to excuse, if not indeed to absolutely praise, Liling's conduct; at which Vouti was so much enraged that he said Ssematsien deserved death. He ordered him to be made a eunuch so that he should have no descendants.—Mailla, vol. iii. p. 81.

sent on a fresh and, as it proved, a last mission of revenge. At first he carried everything before him, defeating the Tartars in several battles, and was on his road back to China when he was surprised by his crafty enemy and defeated. Li Kwangli, laid down his arms and, like his grandson Liling, accepted the favours of the Tartar king. This was the last act in the foreign policy and military career of the great Emperor. The Tartar war which he had waged for more than fifty years had not closed in the decisive manner which he had anticipated, but, although marked by many disasters after the death of the great generals Wei Tsing and Hokiuping, it left China stronger on her western frontiers, and with a greater reputation in Asia than she had ever before possessed.

Three years after the defeat of Li Kwangli, Vouti died in the seventy-first year of his age. He had been Emperor of China for the long space of fifty-four years. His later days had been rendered unhappy by quarrels in his own family, and the rivalry of his heirs provoked disturbances which, on one occasion, resulted in a short civil war. Ill-health and the superstitious habits* which he had acquired and fostered tended to

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* The Chinese historians have preserved several stories indicative of Vouti's superstition. Of these the following, which tells its own story and carries its own moral, is perhaps the most striking: A would-be magician pretended that he had discovered an elixir of eternal life, and having obtained audience of the Emperor, was on the point of offering him a draught when one of the courtiers present stepped forward and quaffed it off. Vouti, enraged, turned upon his minister and ordered him to prepare for instant death. "Sire," replied the ready courtier, "how can I be executed since I have drunk the draught of immortality?" The quack was exposed and Vouti admitted the folly of the whole proceeding.

throw an increased gloom over his declining days. The anxiety produced by the Tartar war did not allow of its being mitigated, and when he found his end approaching there was as much of apprehension as to possible dangers, as of satisfaction at what he had accomplished in his survey of the great charge which he was about to leave to other hands. When Vouti's death was announced the Chinese and their neighbours felt that a great prince was no more, and that his death might be the signal for disturbance and change.

There can be no question of the great qualities of the Emperor Vouti. In Chinese history there stand out at intervals, generally far apart, the names and the deeds of rulers as great as any the world has ever seen. Of these we may claim for Vouti that he was, among Chinese monarchs, the second in point of time. The great Tsin ruler Hoangti may fairly be considered the first of these, as in some respects he proved himself to be the greatest prince that ever sat on the Dragon throne. Vouti appears to us to have been a less able ruler than the founder of the Tsins, but it must be remembered in his favour that his conquests proved more durable than those of his great predecessor. Fuhkien, Szchuen, Yunnan, became under his guidance Chinese provinces, and the independent kingdoms south of Kokonor were reduced to the condition of vassal states. In his own habits he was studiously moderate. His chief amusement in early days had been to hunt fierce animals unattended by the great escort customary with Chinese rulers, and he was equally attached to the chase. He was of

robust build, and addicted to martial pursuits; but neither his passion for sport nor the desire for martial fame made him blind to the true wants of his people. With the Tartars he saw there never could be any stable peace, and his anticipation proved more correct than even he could have imagined. He would have continued to the very end a war which had to partake of much of the character of one of extermination, and when he left it incomplete he impressed on his ministers the duty of continuing and finishing it. His deeds lived after him, the Han dynasty became established and consolidated under his influence, and his memory still survives among the Chinese, who are now, and probably will always be, proud to style themselves "the sons of Han."

CHAPTER VII.

THE HAN DYNASTY (*continued*).

Chaoti.—Rebellions.—His Presence of Mind.—Early Death and Great Loss to China.—Lieouho, the Boor.—Siuenti.—Ho Kwang, the Minister.—The Tartars.—Vainglorious but Cowardly Generals.—Shensi to the Caspian.—Intrigues of Ho Kwang's Family.—Hohien.—Murder of an Empress.—Destruction of Ho Kwang's Family.—Death of Siuenti.—Yuenti.—Chichi the Tartar.—A Valiant General.—Great Victory.—A Eunuch Minister.—Chingti.—Samarcand.—A Chinese Vitellius.—Gaiti.—An Incipient Reformer.—His Early Death.—Pingti.—Wang Mang.—Act of Sacrilege.—Murder of Emperor.—Jutse Yng.—Wang Mang Throws off the Mask.—Temporary Fall of the Hans.

On Vouti's death, Chaoti, the only one of his sons who had taken no part in the civil disturbances referred to in the previous chapter, became Emperor, but, as he was of the tender age of eight years, it will be understood that his share in the functions of government was at first small.* The administration was entrusted to and carried on by the two ministers Tsiunpouy and

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* Gutzlaff, in his "History of China," says that Chaoti "sank into indolence and dissipation." There is no authority whatever for this statement, as quite the reverse was the case. Mr. Gutzlaff probably confounded Chaoti with one of his successors.

Ho Kwang. As has often been the case in Eastern countries, the death of a strong ruler and the accession of a child to supreme power afforded the opportunity sought by the ambitious for the advancement of their private ends. So it was when Vouti died and Chaoti was proclaimed his successor, for Lieoutan, another of Vouti's sons, openly raised the standard of revolt, and enjoyed for a brief space in his own principality the attributes of imperial power. But the movement did not receive popular support, and the measures taken by Chaoti's ministers were so effectual that within a few months of Lieoutan's first declaration his followers had been dispersed, and he himself was occupying a prison in the palace fortress at Changnan. The clemency of the new ruler was shown by his moderation towards the rebel, whose life he spared. Another attempt was made by an impostor,* a sort of Perkin Warbeck, who gave himself out as Vouti's eldest son, but his career was cut short by Tsiunpouy arresting him with his own hands.

Although Lieoutan had experienced the generosity of his brother he had by no means laid aside his pretensions to the throne. Permitted to be at large in the palace, he turned his liberty to account by joining in the intrigues of dissatisfied courtiers against both the minister Ho Kwang and Chaoti himself. He

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* His name was Chingfangsoui, a native of a small town in Shensi. His adventure reads rather ridiculous, as his sole plan consisted in driving into Changnan seated in a "yellow" chariot (yellow being the imperial colour). The presence of mind and resolution of Tsiunpouy were, nevertheless, highly commendable. See Mailla, vol. iii. pp. 102–103.

became the centre of these plots which had as their chief object the placing of himself upon the throne. Fortunately intelligence of these schemes reached Chaoti's ears before their preparations had been completed, and we are told that "he took up his red pencil, and signed the order for the arrest of the conspirators with the greatest possible calmness." The whole of the conspirators were publicly executed, with the exception of Lieoutan, who as a special favour was permitted to poison himself. This was the last of the plots formed against Chaoti, who throughout had borne himself in a becoming manner and had given promise of the possession of great qualities.

The relations with the Tartars were on the whole satisfactory, and Chaoti succeeded in effecting the release of Souou, a Chinese envoy, who had been kept in confinement by them for nineteen years. The fidelity of this minister, Souou, long formed a favourite theme with the ballad-makers of his country, who loved to draw a contrast between his fidelity and the falseness of Liling and Li Kwangli. While there was tranquillity on the western border the relations with some others of the tributary populations were not equally satisfactory. A rising in Leaoutung had to be put down by the employment of a picked force of Chinese troops, and this happened on two different occasions. Similar events occurred in other parts of the Empire, but in no case did the risings assume serious proportions, and in all they were repressed without difficulty. It was just as all danger to his authority had been dissipated, and when his people

were forming the most glowing expectations of his future rule, that the young Chaoti died in his thirty-first year. Beyond question his early death was a serious loss to his country and a grave blow to the prospects of a dynasty which was already undecided as to its legitimate head.

Some hesitation was shown in proclaiming any of his relations Emperor, as Chaoti had left no heir; but the claims of his uncle Lieouho were considered to be both the strongest and the most convenient to be allowed. Whatever hopes may have been formed as to his qualifications were however soon dispelled. He developed low tastes, and his conduct brought contempt upon the Imperial dignity. He was speedily deposed, and retired without regret into private life where he could indulge, unobserved and without hindrance, the coarse amusements for which he showed so marked a preference.

It was the great minister Ho Kwang who assumed the conduct of the measures necessary for the deposition of Lieouho, and for the selection of a successor to the throne. The latter was a task not free from difficulty, and after some consideration the choice was made in favour of Siuenti,* a prince who was at this time about seventeen years of age and the eldest of the great grandchildren of Vouti. Ho Kwang held towards him not only the delicate relations of a confidential minister, but also the more intimate position

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* Mailla says Siuenti was the grandson of Lieou Wei, Vouti's eldest son; on the other hand, Du Halde calls him Vouti's grandson. The former is probably correct.

of an affectionate and solicitous guardian.* Ho Kwang strove to make Siuenti the model prince which Chaoti had given promise of being, and the native record runs that "Ho Kwang gave all his care to perfecting the new Emperor in the science of government." Siuenti's early years had been passed in ignorance of his origin, and the official who had been entrusted by Vouti with the charge saw no reason in the troublous times prevailing to divulge the secret of which he became the sole depositary. It was only when Ho Kwang was in search of a prince that Pingki, the official in question, produced the right heir. The first acts of the new Emperor were marked by moderation and a sound appreciation of the wants of his subjects. They furnished the nation with good reason for looking forward to a reign of peace and internal progress and development. Nor were they to be disappointed.

Early in the new reign (B.C. 71) the Tartars, thwarted in their attempts to break through the Chinese frontier, turned their attack against the dependent kingdom of Ousun, which appealed for aid at Changnan. After the usual deliberation, and a fresh declaration of the views of Chinese statesmen on the subject of the Tartars, it was decided to comply with the request of the vassal Prince of Ousun, and to send a large army to his assistance. The generals were appointed, and the army set out in due course for its

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* Mr. Gutzlaff has totally misrepresented the character of this great and estimable statesman.

destination; but these warlike generals had far different ideas in their heads than those connected with the hardships of campaigning and the dangers of battle. Their instructions were to drive the Tartars beyond the Gobi desert, but after passing a pleasant sojourn in the close neighbourhood of Shensi they returned, giving out that they had won several victories and accomplished all the objects of the war. This deception could not remain long concealed, and when it was made known the generals were commanded to put an end to their existence. This order they showed no reluctance in obeying, and perhaps they may have consoled themselves with the reflection that, as victory would have been impossible to such as them, they were meeting the inevitable after a more pleasant experience than would have been that of the warlike qualities of the Tartars.

Meanwhile the Tartars were themselves not free from some of those disturbing elements which have been seen at work within the Chinese Empire. Civil strife and conflicting ambitions had set one tribe against another, and chief opposed to chief. Five kings had risen in their midst, and these warred with each other after the bitter fashion of their race. The struggle sapped their strength and exhausted their energy, and several of the chiefs turned towards China in the desire to obtain some guarantee for the preservation of the possessions that remained to them. One prince voluntarily surrendered to the border authorities, and another came in, after a formal arrangement had been drawn up, and was re-

ceived with open arms by the Emperor. In accomplishing this satisfactory result the well-known character of the Emperor for justice and generosity towards his opponents exercised a great influence, and for the first time in history the Chinese troops became known among the peoples of Eastern Asia as "the troops of justice." They were the police, defending the weak against the turbulent and the strong. It was at this period that all the peoples from Shensi to the Caspian Sea acknowledged the supremacy of China.* Siuenti determined to celebrate this event by erecting a hall in which portraits of all the generals and statesmen who had helped to attain this great result should be placed. This hall was named the Kilin or pavilion, and prominent among those whose images stood therein were Souou, Pingki, and, greatest of all, Ho Kwang.† Thus terminated for this epoch, in an act of ceremony, the long Tartar wars (B.C. 51).

One circumstance, and one only, had marred the happiness of the young Emperor, and disturbed the tranquillity of his reign. The great minister Ho Kwang, who had done so much for his country, showed his true greatness of mind by the moderation of his conduct. He had played the part of king maker with the necessary address and courage; but

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* Too literal a meaning must not be attached to this phrase of the Chinese historians. The tribute sent was very often merely a present or gift-offering, and no doubt intended to promote commercial interests. On the other hand, even this shows the growing fame of China, when people should come from remote and inaccessible countries to her capital.

† Ho Kwang's name was not placed underneath his statue because of the revolt of his family to be yet related.

he had no evil intentions against either the constitution or the person of the Emperor. He was well content that the state should be governed by its legitimate ruler, and, very shortly after his elevation, Siuenti was practically left to rule the Empire in accordance with his own judgment. But, if Ho Kwang was perfectly satisfied with being the chief adviser and minister of a constitutional sovereign, his family were not equally content with a subordinate position. To them it seemed that nothing short of supreme power could reward Ho Kwang's deserts, or satisfy their desires. Therefore while Ho Kwang was himself perfectly satisfied and devoted to his master there was in the state a party, nearly allied by blood to himself and trading on his name, which was working to effect the overthrow of Siuenti.

At the bottom of this plot, which had for its object the raising of a member of Ho Kwang's family to the Imperial dignity, and which, if it failed, would be sure to have the effect of discrediting that minister, was a woman, goaded by an insatiate ambition, unrestrained by those dictates of generosity that always qualify the acts of the worst men. Hohien, Ho Kwang's wife, had obtained a footing on the threshold of the enterprise she had conceived by the marriage of her daughter with the Emperor; but, although both mother and daughter endeavoured to obtain the concession, Siuenti persistently refused to acknowledge as Empress any except his first wife Hiuchi. Hohien was not to be easily baulked in her desire. Hiuchi fell ill and died; and the physician, a creature

in the pay of Hohien, was cast into prison, there to await examination under torture. In this extremity Hohien made full confession to Ho Kwang, who, to save the family honour, ordered that torture should not be applied to the prisoner. The pressing danger of discovery thus staved off, Hohien's daughter was proclaimed Empress; while Hohien, still unsatisfied, turned again to dangerous plotting. Siuenti showered honours on this family, which Ho Kwang refused for himself, and unwillingly saw bestowed upon his relatives. But if Siuenti was thus anxious to show his appreciation of Ho Kwang's services he was actuated as much as ever by a love of justice. Hohien's daughter had been recognised as Empress, but when an heir apparent was proclaimed (B.C. 67) it was the eldest son of Hiuchi, the murdered wife. Soon after this event a design which Hohien formed for the poisoning of the young prince was discovered, and she and all the members of her family were either executed, or commanded "to drink the waters of eternal life." So was it that the crimes of a woman cast a shadow of opprobrium across the spotless name of Ho Kwang, one of the greatest statesmen China ever possessed.

Siuenti died in the year B.C. 49 at the early age of forty-two, having during his reign of twenty-five years evinced the possession of many great and estimable qualities. He had directed much of his attention to the laws which he had simplified, and his eulogist boasts that he had stripped them of everything which could serve as a subterfuge for the elusion of prompt and effectual justice—a statement which, remembering

that Chinese intellect is as subtle and astute as any in the world, must be accepted with much reservation. Entitled to respect for what he himself accomplished, there is no doubt that one of the main causes of his successful administration was that he received much of the reward which had been long pending from the wise acts of the great Vouti.

Yuenti, the son of the deceased Emperor, had the good fortune to ascend the throne at a more mature age* than any of his immediate predecessors, but he appears to have been unable to benefit either himself or his people by the fact that he was able to assume the task of government without any interregnum. His first acts† were fairly prudent, and of a kind to make the person of the new prince popular; but his reign of sixteen years affords little scope for detailed description. A great rising took place in the southern provinces, and a large army had to be sent against the rebels. At first too small a force was sent, and the rebels were successful; but then large reinforcements were despatched and the rising was stamped out.‡ The reputation won by this victory was enhanced by a great triumph over a chief of the Tartars. Chichi, one of the kings of the Hiongnou, had, in the disruption of the confederate power of his people, gathered to himself a formidable band of devoted followers. He

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* He was twenty-six years of age.

† He remitted taxes and reasserted the old dictum that the people were only liable to the State for one tenth of their produce. The tithe was the only legitimate Chinese tax.

‡ The Chinese are very fond of impressing this point on the reader. One of the elements of success is superior numbers.

assumed an attitude of semi-defiance towards the Chinese, who at first only regarded his movements with suspicion, and then came to the decision to put a stop to them before they should constitute a danger to their peace of mind. For this, however, the credit did not belong to Yuenti.

Chintang, the Chinese commander on the Shensi frontier, was one of those resolute and prescient soldiers who never hesitate when an emergency arises to act in independence of their official instructions. Holding joint command with himself was one of those men who, always respectable, adhere to the minutiæ of their duty when the safety of the state is imperilled, and who do the right thing when the favourable opportunity has passed away. Here on this occasion Chintang, taking all responsibility upon himself, resolved, in spite of the objections of his colleague, who wished to refer the matter to the capital, to attack Chichi before he was fully prepared for war. The boldness of his plan was equalled by the celerity with which he carried it into execution. By forced marches he approached and surrounded the chief camp of the Tartar king, and, although Chichi defended himself valiantly, the Chinese attack succeeded. Chichi died of his wounds, and his head was sent to Changnan. The effect produced by this great victory was felt along the whole of the frontier, and all the Tartar chiefs hastened to renew the expression of their dependence on the Emperor.

The expedition against Chichi was, indeed, the sole event of any importance which marked the reign

of Yuenti. That prince proved timid, irresolute and superstitious. A eunuch swayed his council, and luxury and apathy prevailed in his palaces. The Empire was prosperous because it enjoyed peace, but the peace was not so much due to the vigilance of the sovereign as it was the natural consequence of previous events. Yuenti died in the sixteenth year of his reign unmourned by the subjects who had welcomed his accession (B.C. 33).

His son Chingti became Emperor, and one of the first acts of the new reign was the disgrace and banishment of the eunuch who had injured the character of Yuenti's administration. But as he replaced him by distributing the higher offices indiscriminately among the relations of his mother, neither the public service nor those representing it benefited by the change. Chingti soon showed that he was not much impressed by the greatness of his position. He neglected the cares of government for the pleasures of the table, and his amours and carousings became the scandal of the well-ordered and decorous Chinese officials.* Various calamities fell on the country during his reign. Floods and violent storms were of frequent occurrence; and on one occasion Changnan, the capital, was flooded, and the Emperor and his family had to seek safety in boats. These misfortunes were further aggravated by popular disturbances and by the decline in vigour of the central authority. As if to reflect on

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* See Du Halde, vol. i. p. 358–359, for a terse description of his excesses.

the conduct of this prince, the King of Kipin, or Samarcand, who had alone held aloof from China under the previous reigns, sent an embassy to Changnan, where it was honourably received. Chingti saw in this act a testimony to his own greatness, and not the result of the wisdom of his predecessors.* Fortunately for China Chingti died suddenly after he had been on the throne for twenty-six years. Unregretted, save by those who had shared his orgies, this prince has left the name of being one of the worst of Chinese monarchs, a kind of Chinese Vitellius. His death happened in the year B.C. 7.

Chingti was succeeded by his nephew Gaiti, who endeavoured to restore the sinking credit of his House. He had not been an indifferent spectator of the disorders in the palace during the reign of his uncle, and he strove to remove the abuses and to generally reform the state administration. But his reign was all too short to afford scope for the amiability of his disposition and to allow of his reforms taking root. He surrounded himself with men of his own age, and showed every reason for anticipating that he would establish a new order of things. If time did not allow of any very remarkable achievement being performed, there was at least a return of vigour to the administration, and Gaiti's reign might have taken a high place among the Han Emperors had it been of

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* A very interesting description, too long to quote and too important to curtail, of the countries of Asia is given in Mailla's great work from the lips of Toukin, a Chinese minister and traveller. See Mailla, vol. iii. pp. 186–88.

longer duration. He died one year before the commencement of our era, having occupied the throne only six years.*

Among the great officials who had been displaced by Gaiti was Wang Mang, who had taken a considerable part in affairs during the life of Chingti, but who, on the death of that prince, had thrown up his appointments and retired into private life. He had, however, far from given up the ambitious dreams which he had cherished from his youth, and his powerful influence at court brought him back into public life on Gaiti's death. One of his first acts was to disgrace and overwhelm with ruin the favourites and admirers of the deceased Emperor, when, having accomplished this to his own satisfaction, he entered into a pact with Gaiti's mother for the governing of the state. There was a short interregnum during which these events occurred, and then a young grandson of the Emperor Yuenti was placed by these allies on the throne. As he was only nine years of age, he was unable to assert his rights in matters of state, and the persons who put him forward gave him the name of Pingti or the peaceful Emperor. Pingti began his reign in the first year of our era, but as it closed within five years it need hardly be said that the transactions under his nominal guidance were carried out without either his cognizance or consent.

Beyond incurring blame for his insatiable ambition

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* Mailla says he was thirty-five at his death; Pauthier, on the authority of the "Litaikisse," twenty-five.

the administration of Wang Mang deserves praise rather than censure. He preserved the national credit in his dealings with his neighbours. The Tartars were compelled to comply with the letter of their treaties, and the kingdoms of the south sent tribute and presents to the capital.* In all his acts Wang Mang strove to obtain a popularity which would enable him to shake himself free, when the favourable opportunity should present itself for his throwing aside the mask, from the few trammels upon his conduct left to such Imperial authority as remained.

The one element of embarrassment to him was the want of money, and this compelled him to resort to the desperate expedient of stripping the tombs of the deceased princes of the Han family of the jewels and other valuables buried with them. This act was no doubt shocking to the higher orders, but by some skilful manipulation, which the records do not preserve, Wang Mang was able to commit this sacrilege without alienating the support of the people, although he was violating one of the most cherished of Chinese customs. Having gone to this length, Wang Mang did not hesitate to take the next step, and get rid of the Emperor. Wang Mang himself handed Pingti the poisoned cup, and when the unfortunate boy was lying in agony in the palace Wang Mang had the presence of mind to loudly express his grief at the sad fate which had befallen his master.

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* White pheasants are specially mentioned.

A child named Jutse Yng was placed upon the throne for the sake of appearances, but Wang Mang was accorded all the prerogatives of supreme power. A party among the great men in the state was formed against him, but after some hesitation Wang Mang grappled with and crushed them. Jutse Yng had then served his turn and vanished from history. Wang Mang, after ten years' intriguing, threw aside the mask and was proclaimed Emperor. He sought to give permanence to his dynasty by taking a fresh name and style. The Han Empire became by his decree that of the Sin, and for a short space disappeared from history.*

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* The Hans up to this point are spoken of as the Western Hans, from their capital having been at Singan in Shensi. When, after the death of Wang Mang, the line was restored, the capital was removed to Honan and the restored line became distinguished as the Eastern Hans.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REVIVAL AND FALL OF THE HANS.*

Wang Mang the Usurper.—Tartar Irruptions.—Insurrections.—Spread of the Rebellion.—"The Crimson Eyebrows."—Fall and Death of Wang Mang.—Restoration of Hans.—Lieou Hieouen's Short Reign.—His Deposition and Murder.—Kwang Vouti.—Restoration of Order.—Overthrow of "the Crimson Eyebrows."—General Fongy.—Lieou Penti.—Keng Kang.—His Great Victory.—Cochin China.—A Heroine.—Mayuen.—The Sentiments of a Hero.—Death of Kwang Vouti.—His Character.—Mingti.—Panchow.—The Hoangho.—Mingti's Dyke.—Machi.—Introduction of Buddhism.—Changti.—Convict Army.—The Sienpi.—Long Peace.—Cochin China Tribute.—Hoti.—The Eunuchs.—Panchow's Victories.—His March to the Caspian.—Relations with Roman Empire.—Panhoiepan.—Changti the Second.—Ganti.—Empress Regent.—Earthquakes.—Chunti.—Mamien.—Emperor Dies of Fright.—Two Boy Emperors.—Leangki.—Houanti.—Leangki's Crimes and Death.—The Sienpi.—Chinese Victories.—Twan Keng.—Lingti.—The Eunuchs.—Sienpi Again.—Chow Pow.—His Sense of Duty.—Yellow Bonnets.—Death of Lingti.—An Interregnum.—Pienti and Hienti.—Hotsin.—Yuen Chow and Tongchow.—Murders.—Hienti Emperor.—Fall of Tongchow.—Tsow Tsow.—His Skill as a General.—His Rivals, and Death.—His Son, Tsowpi.—Abdication of Hienti.—End of the Han Dynasty.

HAVING cast aside the mask, and assumed supreme authority, Wang Mang hoped to strengthen his

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* Although Wang Mang proclaimed a new dynasty under the style of the Sin, the Chinese historians refuse to recognise this ephemeral power as distinct from that of the Hans.

position by a policy of violent and sweeping innovation. He divided the Empire into principalities more in accordance with what he considered his interests required, and reduced the number of feudal princes by wholesale depositions and arrests.* The very boldness of his measures unnerved his enemies, and he carried matters with a high hand during the earlier years of his usurped authority. The success of his audacity was not to prove of long duration, and while his subjects were cowering under his implacable resentment, his neighbours saw in the disappearance of the Hans and the rise of an adventurer the opportunity of setting aside the arrangements which wiser rulers had concluded for the purpose of binding them to the Chinese alliance. The Tartars were the first to openly proclaim their resolution to concede no longer to the new ruler the outward marks of respect which they had yielded to his predecessors. They openly set Wang Mang at defiance, and, fostering the agitation among all the bordering tribes, carried their incursions into provinces which had become prosperous and wealthy by their absence during a whole generation. In the face of this irruption Wang Mang showed the greatest irresolution and weakness. His frontier garrisons shut up or destroyed, he did nothing to assert his authority, and, during his life, the Tartars continued their raids with impunity. The provinces of the north, which had flourished

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* The Empire was divided into nine provinces and a hundred and twenty-five districts, in which there were two thousand two hundred and three towns.

during thirty years of assured tranquillity, again suffered from the depredations of the neighbouring hordes, and the wealth and prosperity which had come in the train of peace vanished from the land.

In comparison with other troubles, which speedily arose, that caused by the Tartars was slight. Wang Mang was threatened by dangers much more pressing and nearer home. Risings in the eastern provinces were soon succeeded by a serious rebellion in the south, where the districts beyond the Great River were but loosely knit to Chinese authority. Wherever Wang Mang turned there were foes either declared, or only awaiting a favourable opportunity to reveal themselves. Wang Mang had displaced the Hans, and raised himself to a supreme position by a capacity for intrigue in the palace, but it soon became clear that, unless he could make good his position by valour and ability in the field, the Chinese people would not long accept him as their ruler. The apathy which he showed in his movements against the Tartars, who were the first to put forward a proclamation demanding the restoration of the Hans,* encouraged his other opponents, and when the prevailing sedition revealed itself Wang Mang failed to act with the necessary promptitude. It was only after the popular resentment had broken out on all sides that Wang Mang began to bestir himself. He had waited too long. The spell of inactivity had warped his strength, and when he appealed to the sword the

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* Mailla, vol. iii. p. 240.

foundations of his power had been sapped, and his enemies were on the high road to victory.

Sluggish in his movements, his new-found activity was scarcely more happy in its result. Having sent an overwhelming force against a small band of rebels in Szchuen, his general succeeded in inclosing them in a town where they were obliged to yield themselves up "on terms." Wang Mang refused to recognise the validity of the arrangement, and caused them all to be put to the sword. In this act of treachery and cruelty his other enemies saw proof that the struggle was to be one without mercy and to the death. The wave of popular feeling, strong in China with the strength of a free-thinking and self-opiniated people, set in against the usurper, and in favour of that line of kings whose merits were remembered and deplored while their faults and frailties were condoned.

So it happened that after this slight success which had thrown a gleam of brightness over the darkening fortunes of Wang Mang, the popular hostility became intensified, and the confidence of the leaders of the hostile parties rose higher and higher. The descendants of the Han princes came out of the seclusion into which they had been forced, and stood forward in the van of Wang Mang's opponents. Defeat followed defeat, and the circle of his foes drew in closer and closer to his capital; yet Wang Mang, diffident of his own courage, or unnerved in the presence of danger, refused to take the field in person. After twelve years of a war marked by all the painful and cruel circumstances of civil strife, the usurper was besieged

in his capital, which he failed to defend. When the victors had established themselves within the city, and were on the point of entering the palace, Wang Mang retired to one of the upper towers to put an end to his existence, but here his heart failed him, and he was slain by the soldiers of the Han princes. All he could exclaim was, "If Heaven had given me courage what could the family of the Hans have done?" His body was hacked to pieces, and his limbs were scattered about to be trampled under foot by the throng in the streets of Changnan. Fourteen years of independent authority, marked by a series of misfortunes and disasters, had failed to give Wang Mang any reward or consolation for the crimes which he had committed in obtaining a position that ceased to be of value as soon as it had been attained.*

Lieou Hiouen, the elder of the Han princes, was placed upon the throne by his victorious soldiery; and

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* Among the most formidable of Wang Mang's enemies was Fanchong, leader of a band of rebels in the modern province of Shantung. His band soon assumed the proportions of an army, and Fanchong showed his capacity for command by introducing a strict discipline which prevented his force becoming disorganised by success. Fanchong defeated all the troops sent against him, and became the most popular of the leaders in the war with Wang Mang. In the very crisis of the struggle he took a step which, perhaps, had a greater effect than any other circumstance in determining the course of the contest. He caused his soldiers to paint their eyebrows red, as expressive of their intention to fight with the last drop of their blood. He gave out as his proclamation, "If you meet the 'Crimson Eyebrows,' join yourselves to them: it is the sure road to safety. Wang Kwang (Wang Mang's general) can be opposed without danger; but those who wish for death may join that commander." The "Crimson Eyebrows" became not less celebrated in the China of their day than the Camisards were in France.—Mailla, vol. iii. pp. 248–249.

one of his first steps was to remove the capital from Changnan to Loyang.* The restoration of the Hans was hailed with general expressions of delight throughout the whole of China. The old men wept with joy, says the Chinese chronicler, when they again saw the banner of the Hans waving over the person of the Emperor. Lieou Hiouen afforded the people no solid reason for welcoming the change. He gave himself up to the indulgence of pleasure, and left to his cousin Lieou Sieou the task of restoring the family authority. Lieou Sieou set about his work in an energetic fashion, and, while the Emperor was engaged in court pleasures, this prince employed himself in the reconquest of lost provinces, and in the gradual formation of a party of his own.

"The crimson-eyebrows" who had taken, under their chief Fanchong, so prominent a part in the delivery of the kingdom from Wang Mang, had now become a source of danger to the public tranquillity. Fanchong was ambitious, and his personal influence served to keep a large number of his followers under his flag. From patriots they became brigands, and the allies of the Hans developed into their most formidable enemies. Lieou Sieou† prevailed against them, and after a stubbornly contested campaign completely defeated them. They were not finally overthrown until some years later, and "the crimson-eyebrows" were to again come prominently forward before they passed out of history. The incapacity of Lieou

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* That is, from Singan to Honan.

† Lieou Sieou was afterwards Emperor Kwang Vouti.

Hiouen, or Yang Wang, was by this time demonstrated beyond all dispute, and the same army which two years before had placed him on the throne, declared unanimously that Lieou Sieou was the only man fit to rule the Empire and to restore the Hans to their ancient splendour. Lieou Sieou, bred to a soldier's life, was proclaimed Emperor amid the clash of arms, under the style of Kwang Vouti.

The new ruler wished to treat the deposed prince with magnanimity, although he had murdered one of his brothers, and sent him a guarantee of personal safety, with an offer at the same time of the principality of Hoai Yang. This proposal the deposed prince indignantly refused, preparing to place himself in the hands of "the crimson-eyebrows." Fanchong, probably because he dreaded his name proving injurious to his own influence, broke the laws of hospitality, and, after a momentary hesitation, caused his guest to be put to death. Thus ended the short career of the first of the restored princes of the Hans.

The very year marked by the accession to power of the Emperor Kwang Vouti beheld the reappearance of Fanchong's bands as enemies of the public peace, and as fighting for their own hand. While the new ruler was establishing his position at Loyang "the crimson-eyebrows" had seized Changnan, which they pillaged. So long as there was enough to supply all their wants in the deserted capital and the surrounding district, they made it their headquarters, and indeed it was not until they had reason to dread the approaching army of the Emperor that they withdrew

from the city, which had been the scene of the overthrow of Wang Mang, and of the reinstallation of the Hans in power. Their excesses while there had marked them out as public enemies, and although their numbers were computed to exceed two hundred thousand men, all these were the objects of national execration. An army smaller than their own was sent against them by Kwang Vouti as soon as he had succeeded in restoring order in other districts of the realm; and the command was placed in the hands of Fongy one of the best generals of the age. By a series of skilful manœuvres he made up for deficiency in numbers, and, having worsted "the crimson-eyebrows" in numerous skirmishes, he accepted a general engagement, which resulted in a complete and brilliant victory. In the crisis of the battle Fongy turned the tide in his own favour by bringing up a reserve composed of prisoners he had captured in the previous encounters, who mingled themselves without being observed among their former comrades, when their sudden attack produced a panic and Fanchong's army was driven in a shattered state from the field. Soon after this Fanchong accepted the terms offered him. The "crimson-eyebrows" disbanded, and Lieou Penti, a younger member of the Han family who had been put forward as Emperor, became a state prisoner. Fongy crowned the campaign by a brilliant success over a large army composed of the fragments of several rebel bands. With this victory, won two years after his accession to power, Kwang Vouti had crushed all his domestic opponents, and became able to turn his attention to

affairs connected with the state, and its foreign relations.

Although thus far victorious Kwang Vouti had still many troubles and difficulties before him; in fact his whole life was spent in the task of overcoming them. A great war in the south was carried on with remarkable vigour and bitterness. It had many phases, and did not conclude until a much later period; but in the year 29 of our era a general named Keng Kang brought its first phase to a satisfactory conclusion by several victories obtained over superior numbers. The honour of these successes belonged exclusively to Keng Kang, who, although on the eve of being reinforced by the Emperor in person, seized a favourable opportunity for striking a decisive blow against his adversary. When one of his lieutenants recommended that he should defer his attack until the Emperor had come up with fresh troops, Keng Kang is reported to have made the following apposite reply: "The duty of a son and of a subject, when his father or his prince is expected, is to prepare the best wine and to kill the fattest calf for their reception, and to go forth to welcome them in advance; therefore since the Emperor is so close at hand we must give battle tomorrow, in order that we may appear before him as brave and faithful subjects." The victory was proportionate with the spirit in which it was fought on the side of the Imperial troops. The rebel leaders indeed escaped from the field, but discord followed in the train of defeat. Mutual recriminations ensued when one leader, seeing no hope save

in recognising the authority of the Emperor, murdered his comrade and accepted the terms offered him.

Another bitter war was fought with an ambitious prince named Weigao in the difficult country between Shensi and Szchuen, but during many years the result proved dubious. At last this chief died, and, although his son Weichun inherited both his position and his ambition, the Chinese generals then succeeded in bringing the war to a speedy termination. Weichun having been taken prisoner was placed in honourable confinement, but breaking his parole was recaptured and executed. Kwang Vouti had been twelve years on the throne when this event occurred, and wearied of the long wars which he had been compelled to wage, he looked forward to peace and tranquillity during the remainder of his life. It is reported that, when his son asked him, about this time, how an army was placed in order of battle, he refused to reply. Events were to prove too strong for him. Desirous of being a man of peace, the necessities of the time made him a warrior. While professing his wish to devote his days to the study of the art of government, and to sheathe a sword he had wielded since his boyhood, the number of his opponents, the confidence of his neighbours that China was in a state of decrepitude, kept his attention directed to the field of active affairs and prevented the sword of just authority being hidden in the scabbard. So to the end of his days Kwang Vouti remained a man of war.

Out of civil disturbance, fostered in some cases by restless neighbours, there arose foreign wars and ex-

peditions against the states adjoining his own. From Leaoutung to Cochin China, on all the borders of the Empire, there was not an ambitious chieftain, or a marauding clan, which did not see, as was thought, a favourable opportunity for encroachment if only for the purposes of rapine. It was Kwang Vouti's peculiar duty to show that this opinion was a mistaken one, and to restore the diminished splendour of the authority of the Chinese sovereign. Among the most notable of the wars thus occasioned was that with the state of Kaochi, the modern Tonquin and Cochin China. The subjection of a portion of this country* will not have been forgotten; and during the crisis of these later years there stood forth in that region a daring woman, who aspired to be the deliverer of her native land. This heroine, a princess of the native line, was called Chingtse, and, having stirred up her own people and those of the neighbouring states, she led her army to encounter the Chinese troops garrisoning the country. Her skill proved as conspicuous as the intrepidity she had previously shown, and the Chinese garrison was either destroyed or sought safety by making a timely retreat. Chingtse was proclaimed Queen of Kaochi, and for a time she ruled her native land with wisdom and without being disturbed.

Kwang Vouti could not acquiesce in so decisive a reverse at the hands of a woman. It was incumbent upon him to act vigorously for the reparation

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* See *ante* page 76.

of a defeat calculated to injure his reputation more seriously than many other disasters of greater importance. A great armament was collected both on land and on sea, the roads to Kaochi were repaired, and after months spent in preparations for carrying on the war on a large scale, an immense army was collected in the southern portion of Kwantung for the invasion and reconquest of Kaochi. Mayuen, who ranked with Fongy and Keng Kang as the best generals of the age, was entrusted with the command. Chingtse spared no effort to worthily oppose this host, and in the battle of the war the Chinese historians admit that, had her allies fought with the same resolution as her immediate followers, it might have gone hard with their own troops. As the result was, however, Chingtse was completely defeated, and her country again became the vassal of China. No sooner had Mayuen brought this campaign to a successful conclusion than he volunteered to lead another army against the Hiongnou, saying that it ill became a man of courage to die in his bed surrounded by his family, for a field of battle strewn with arrows, pikes and swords was in truth his only bier of honour. Mayuen, elated by previous success, was not completely victorious in this new enterprise, and years were passed in a desultory warfare which, although tending to consolidate the authority of the Emperor, was marked by no event of striking importance. Both the Hiongnou and other Tartar tribes in the west, and the Sienpi in the north were, after twenty years of constant warfare, less reluctant than they had been

to accept the generous terms of the Emperor, and Kwang Vouti's closing years were marked by, if not an assured peace, at the least a respectful truce.

In the year A.D. 57 Kwang Vouti died, after a reign of thirty-three years, leaving behind him a reputation for ability and for a desire to foster the interests of his people scarcely inferior to that of any of his race. To his ability as a general much of the credit for the restoration of the Hans was due, and it was not the least meritorious portion of his reign that his moderation helped still more towards restoring the popularity of his family. He never pronounced a sentence of death without regret, and until his offers had been spurned, and his acts reciprocated with treachery he never treated his adversaries with the sternness always meted out in Eastern countries to a foe. He strove above all things to restrain the ambition of the great, and to govern the country in accordance, not with the interests of the few, but with the necessities of the many. China has had greater rulers than Kwang Vouti, but she has never had one more popular with or better loved by his subjects.*

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* Many incidents are preserved in the Chinese histories relating to this monarch. Some of the most notable are the following. On one occasion he wished to take the field in person, but a minister, Kouyen, did his utmost to deter him. All his arguments proving unavailing, Kouyen cut the reins of the chariot when the Emperor was on the point of departure. He was forgiven, but none the less Kwang Vouti persisted in his resolve and continued his journey. Another incident was that when he rewarded the trusty custodian of one of the city gates for refusing to let him enter after dark without knowing the countersign. While a tyrant would

Mingti, the fourth of his sons, was chosen to succeed this ruler (A.D. 57), and during his reign of eighteen years gave general satisfaction to his subjects by his wisdom and clemency. The clouds which had so thickly obscured the horizon had to a great extent cleared off, and although there were troubles in the neighbouring kingdoms only the echo of them penetrated into China. The strength of the Hiongnou had greatly declined in consequence of divisions in their own camp, and a few successes obtained in the Kokonor region by a general named Panchow, who will play a prominent part in the history of the next reign, sufficed to bring the whole of the bordering tribes to their knees. With the exception of this war, in which the Chinese strength was only partly engaged, Mingti's reign was one of peace. Prominent among the great works to which he devoted his attention and surplus wealth, was that of regulating the course of the Hoangho, which had proved a perennial source of destruction to the adjoining provinces. Mingti caused a dyke thirty miles in length to be constructed for the relief of the superfluous waters, and so long as this great work was kept in repair we hear no more of the overflowing of the Yellow river.* Mingti if not indulging in war took steps to promote the efficiency of his troops. He restored the military

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have punished the too conscientious official, the prudent ruler, recognising his merit, raised him to a higher post. Other instances could be given in proof of the common sense, generosity and magnanimous conduct of the Emperor Kwang Vouti; but these may suffice.

* Du Halde, vol. i. p. 563.

exercise, and rendered it incumbent on all to practice the use of the national bow. Devoted to literature he still spared time to impress on his generals the precepts of Mayuen, whose daughter Machi he had married. When Mingti died, in A.D. 75, the Hans were firmly reseated on the throne. All rebels had been either vanquished or brought into subjection, and from Corea to Cochin China, from Kokonor to the Eastern Sea, there were none but loyal subjects or contented vassals of the Emperor.

The most remarkable event in the reign of Mingti was certainly the official introduction into China of Buddhism, which although often opposed by subsequent rulers, bitterly hated by all the followers of Confucius, and treated with dislike and indifference by the people as a foreign invention, made good its position in spite of every obstacle, and still remains inextricably entwined with the religious customs of the nation and the state. In consequence of a dream that appeared to Mingti and interpreted to him as meaning that he had seen the supernatural being worshipped in the West, under the name of Fo or Buddha, the Emperor sent envoys into India, or Tianchow, to learn what they could about this new teacher, and if possible to bring back his law. In this they completely succeeded; and although some rumours of Buddhism, and of the teachings of Sakya Muni appear to have penetrated into China at a much earlier period, it was not until the first century of our era was far advanced that, at the invitation of a Chinese ruler, Buddhism made its formal entry into

the country, and took its place among the creeds in which it was held permissible for rational men to put their faith.*

On Mingti's death his son Changti, not eighteen years old at the time, became Emperor, and his reign also was one of tranquillity scarcely disturbed by the noise of war. Neither civil brawl nor foreign strife marred the even tenour of his days. It is true that when he assumed authority, the embers of a quarrel were still smouldering on the north-western frontier, and that the occasion was afforded a Chinese commander to show resolution of no ordinary kind in defending the town entrusted to his charge against an overwhelming force of the Hiongnou. This satisfactory incident was the only exception to prove the rule. Changti, under the guidance of his adopted mother, Machi,† the daughter of the great Mayuen, and one of the finest female characters in Chinese history, turned his attention to peaceful pursuits, and by reducing taxation and regulating the imposts sought to advance the best interests of his people.

The only war in which China was concerned, even indirectly, during this reign, was one in the country west of Shensi. Panchow, reluctant to lose the fruits

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* Dr. Edkins has recently published an exhaustive work on this subject entitled "Chinese Buddhism," 1880. Consult also Pauthier, pp. 256–257, and Mailla, vol. iii. pp. 357–61.

† Machi set an example in the palace of simplicity of life and real nobleness of conduct that all found it incumbent to honour and imitate. Her knowledge of the world and soundness of judgment were shown by the manner in which she opposed the elevation of her kinsmen to the rank of princes by a too-grateful son.

of previous success, solicited Changti's permission to continue his operations on his own resources, and his request was conceded. Panchow was joined in his enterprise by Siukan, a high official, who obtained permission to recruit an army for this service from pardoned criminals—a force for the first time used in these western wars, but to be frequently employed at later stages of history down to the present day. About this time the Hans were further afflicted by the growing power of the Sienpi,* a people established in the western portion of Leaoutung. Between the Sienpi in the north and Panchow in the south it fared badly at this time with the Hiongnou ancestors of the Hun devastators of the Roman Empire. One of the last acts of Changti's short reign was to sanction the sending of the tribute from Cochin China by land instead of by sea, as had hitherto been the practice; and for this purpose one hundred thousand taels were expended in the construction of a road to that country. Changti died in the thirty-first year of his age deeply lamented by a people whom he had governed with prudence and justice (A.D. 88).

Changti was followed by his son Hoti, a child of only ten years; and while his reign was on the whole peaceful, it witnessed one of the most remarkable campaigns ever engaged in by China, but which, occurring at a very great distance from the centre of

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* A short account of the Sienpi will be found in De Guigne's "Hist. des Huns," tom. i. p. 189. Something about these people, called Hienbi by the author, may also be learnt from a description of Corea by the Rev. Mr. Ross, 1879.

her power, raised scarcely a ripple on the surface of Chinese affairs. His mother became Regent, but her brother attempted to wrest, and for a time succeeded in doing so, the governing power out of her hands. As soon as the Emperor reached an age when he was capable of ruling for himself, he evinced qualities of greatness and of virtue that won for him his subjects' hearts. During his reign the eunuchs, who afterwards proved a still greater source of trouble and difficulty, asserted themselves in the administration, and obtained some of the highest offices in the state through the ability of their chief, Ching Chong. Hoti died, A.D. 105, after a reign* of seventeen years, which would have been uneventful but for the deeds of Panchow, now to be described.

During the previous reigns Panchow had warred with unvaried success in the region west of China Proper. Some small kingdoms and numerous tribes had been brought into subjection, and Panchow had spread the terror of his name far beyond the limits of his actual conquests. Several years before Hoti ascended the throne Panchow is stated to have conquered the city of Kashgar, and to have extended the Chinese Empire to as far west as the Pamir; but when Changti died and the youthful Hoti became ruler, Panchow, the veteran general and foremost of Chinese subjects, was able to order things more after the fashion of his own heart. With a largely increased

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* Among the events of this reign must be mentioned the discovery of a new writing paper. There are some reasons for supposing that it may have been papyrus from Egypt.

army he made his position in Eastern Turkestan, or Little Bokhara, the stepping stone for greater triumphs in the kingdoms beyond that state. It is said that in the course of this later campaign, which doubtless covered several years, he reduced fifteen kingdoms, and reached the Caspian, or Northern Sea, as the Chinese called it. This barrier, which he meditated crossing, was represented to him by the inhabitants to be so formidable and of such extent that he abandoned the design he had conceived of carrying his master's dominions beyond its borders. The difficulties which he and his army had overcome in their long march across burning deserts, lofty mountain ranges, and mighty rivers, and through innumerable enemies, afforded every reason for supposing that the Caspian could not retard a host whose progress had up to that been irresistible. The peoples on its borders were fully cognizant of this, and they invested it accordingly with terrors that it did not possess. Panchow's army remained for some time encamped in this quarter, when commercial relations are believed to have been established with the Roman Empire or the great Thsin as it was called by the Chinese. It is instructive to know that the Parthians and their neighbours placed obstacles in the way of this intercourse through their country because they found that their own trade suffered in consequence. Panchow has always been represented as having undertaken these wars from mere love of military ambition, and it would be significant to learn that his object was of so practical a character as the coercion of the peoples of Western

Asia for purposes of trade. In most cases the desire to advance personal interests is found to be a more potent motive power than the mere love of fame.* After concluding this brilliant expedition Panchow returned to China, where the veteran died in his eightieth year, trusted by his sovereign, and, in no extravagant sense, the popular idol.†

Hoti was succeeded by his son Changti, only ten days old when his father died, and who expired within the same year.

Ganti, son of the Prince of Tsingho, a brother of Hoti, then became the choice of the people, or rather of the Palace, and was proclaimed Emperor in the year A.D. 106, when he was only thirteen years of age. Hoti's widow was named Regent during his minority, and wielded the executive power for almost the whole of his reign of nineteen years. Long after Ganti attained years of discretion the Empress-Regent evaded the representations made to her to surrender her position. No remarkable events occurred during this reign, which proved singularly barren of interest. The Regent, wisely recognising that the borders of the Empire had been extended

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* M. Abel Remusat advances this view with great force, and gives in his Memoir on the extension of the Chinese Empire towards the west some interesting details of Roman missions to China and of the commerce between these two great Empires, at first across the continent of Asia, and at a later stage by sea round Cochin China.

† His was a family of remarkable ability. Panchow's brother Pankou was the historian of the Hans, and Panhoiepan, his sister, was a writer of great ability and the editor of her brother's works. For a long account of her works, see Pauthier, pp. 260–65.

further than its strength could permanently sustain, contracted its limits, and relaxed the hold that had been obtained over numerous vassal princes. Internal peace was the better preserved, and the ravages of a pirate named Changpelou were checked and their perpetrator executed, after a career of successful impunity of less than five years. Famines and other grave visitations had brought suffering to the Chinese and anxiety to their rulers; but on the whole the Regent showed herself well able to provide for all the wants of the people, and when Ganti died, in A.D. 124, he left after him the name of an amiable and conscientious prince.

His son Chunti, who succeeded him, soon became engaged in several small wars, out of which he issued successfully. The later years of his reign witnessed the outbreak of several rebellions, of which that headed by Mamien was the most formidable. Mamien aspiring to play a great part caused himself to be proclaimed Emperor; but his career was speedily cut short, and being taken prisoner he suffered the extreme penalty of the law. The only other event of this reign of any importance was the passing of a law that no one should be raised to the magistracy who was less than forty years of age. The contests among men were matched by the conflicts of the elements. To famines there were added earthquakes and landslips on a large scale among the natural phenomena of the time, and Chunti died,* it is said,

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* Mailla, vol. iii. p. 434.

of fright brought on by these catastrophes. Of the same age as his father, like him he reigned nineteen years.

To Chunti succeeded his infant son Chongti, and to Chongti another child Cheti, a descendant of the Emperor Changti. The former was always sickly and died in a few months after Chunti. The latter held nominal authority during one year, when he was poisoned by Leangki, a noble whose ambition forms one of the episodes of the period, and of whom during the next reign more will be heard.

On Cheti's death, Houanti, the elder brother of that unhappy prince, was proclaimed Emperor by the exercise of an unwarranted authority on the part of the murderer Leangki. Like most of the ambitious intriguers who have from time immemorial infested the palace of the Chinese ruler, Leangki was not a prince of the blood, but the brother of one of the Empresses. During the long minority which had followed among the Chinese sovereigns after the death of Hoti, the opportunity was afforded this personage of advancing his own interests at the expense of the state. In the palace his word became virtually supreme, and none ventured to question his commands. An incautious phrase* on the part of the boy Cheti had cost him his life; and now, under the nominal authority of Houanti, Leangki sought to carry everything before him with a high hand. His intrigues and

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* He had said, pointing to Leangki, "There is an arrogant personage !"

crimes constituted the gravest danger in the path of the new ruler. Having removed by foul means several of the ministers of whose influence he was most apprehensive, Leangki grew so confident that he ventured on one occasion into the presence of the Emperor with a sword by his side—an act punishable with death. He was at once charged with the offence, and would have suffered the penalty of the law if Houanti had not intervened, and spared his life in consideration of his having placed him on the throne. Leangki, far from feeling grateful for this generous treatment, intrigued against the Emperor and sought to form a party of his own. His plots were discovered, but, when on the point of capture, he accepted the inevitable and evaded his just sentence by taking poison.

Troubles of various kinds and in different quarters beset the Chinese during this period. The tribes on their borders constantly stirred up by their own irrepressible energy, and by the spasmodic ambition of their chiefs, again became troublesome, and the consequences of their hostile movements assumed increased gravity because of a growing disposition among them to combine against China. The Sienpi, in Leaoutung, at first carried on hostilities against the Hiongnou, but this quarrel was arranged* when they turned their united armies against China. Owing to the skill of the general Twan Keng, and, at a later stage of the con-

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* Apparently by the subjugation of the Huns, part of whom migrated to the West, arriving in Europe at a critical moment, while the rest coalesced with Sienpi.

test, of Toanyng and Hoangfoukoue, these tribes were defeated, and the authority of the Emperor was re-established on a firm basis. In the final battle of the war the balance of victory hung in doubt, until Twan Keng, rushing to the front of his army, exhorted his men to charge once more, with the following heroic speech: "Recall to your minds how often before you have beaten these same opponents, and teach them again to-day that in you they have their masters." Houanti's reign was, therefore, one of brilliant military achievement, and when he died, in A.D. 167, there was no symptom that the long term of the Han rule was approaching its close. Never indeed did it appear more vigorously established than when, after a reign of more than twenty years, the fingers of Houanti relaxed the sceptre of his ancestors.*

Houanti died without leaving an heir, and a young prince, one of the descendants of Changti, was placed on the throne under the name of Lingti. The eunuchs had, during the previous reigns, been extending their influence, and steadily acquiring the chief posts of authority. Under Lingti their activity increased, and finding in the Emperor a weak and easily-guided instrument they aimed at nothing short of a supreme position, when they would be free of all control. The very first act of his reign was to ex-

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* On the occasion of a general amnesty granted by this monarch, Pouchang, who had been wrongfully imprisoned, refused to accept the amnesty, saying that to do so would be to admit his guilt. In his lips is put the remarkable sentiment, worthy of preservation, that, "It is not the prison but the crime of which there is need to feel ashamed."

tend his protection to the eunuchs whom the other ministers endeavoured to crush, and it was under the encouragement of imperial favour that they hatched the plot which made their position more assured than it had ever been. Turning their occupation of the palace to account they gained possession of the Emperor's person, and while one of their number amused him with sword exercise, the rest, making use of his name, seized their rivals and had them promptly executed. After this bold move no one ventured, for some time, to challenge the authority of the eunuchs.

Lingti was engaged in a war of considerable difficulty and importance with the Sienpi, who had shown a fresh disposition to encroach on the Chinese dominions, and through the courage and ability of his commander, Chow Pow, the contest had a very satisfactory termination for him. By some means the family of this general had fallen into the power of the Sienpi, and when Chow Pow came face to face with the enemy they exhibited his mother outside their camp, threatening to slay her the instant he made any movement. There was a short struggle in the mind of Chow Pow, and then duty to his sovereign and his country triumphed over his affection for his mother. He attacked and defeated the Sienpi, who, however, carried their threat into execution. Chow Pow, infuriated at his loss, offered up hecatombs of thousands in expiation of his crime.* It fared ill that day with any foe who crossed

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* It was a crime in Chinese eyes to abandon his mother.

the path of a Chinese soldier, but Chow Pow took his loss so much to heart that he died very shortly after his great victory. The war with the Sienpi was followed by an insurrection fomented by three brothers of the name of Chang, and called that of the Yellow Bonnets. This confederation, like that of the Crimson Eyebrows, did not carry out in practice the admirable precepts with which it started; and after an ephemeral success Lingti's generals succeeded in defeating its forces, capturing its leaders, and completely crushing the whole movement. Fortunate in those who acted for him Lingti suffered none of the inconveniences which he fully incurred through his own negligence, and the confidence he reposed in his eunuch courtiers. He died in A.D. 189, after a reign of twenty-two years.

Lingti's death was followed by an interregnum of nearly two years' duration, which witnessed several events of considerable importance. It was during this period that symptoms of the approaching fall of the Hans became more clearly visible. Lingti left by the Empress Hochi a son named Lieou Pien or Pienti, and by the Empress Tongchi another, Lieou Hiei or Hienti. At first the latter found the more favour in his father's eyes, but owing to some shortcomings in his mother he was put into the background, and Hochi's son proclaimed heir apparent. The eunuchs, and their chief Kien Chow in particular, favoured Hienti; but at first Hochi, mainly by the support of her brother, General Hotsin, carried her point, and Pienti became nominal Emperor. Out of this intrigue

there rose a bitter enmity between the eunuchs and Hotsin, the latter vowing that he would ruin them. He took his measures with great skill, brought troops from the provinces, and undoubtedly had the people at his back; but on the very day when the time had come to strike, his over-confidence gave the eunuchs a momentary advantage. He entered the palace alone, and was at once slain by them. His comrade Yuen Chow stormed the palace, slaughtered every eunuch on whom he could lay his hands, to the number of ten thousand, and took an ample revenge for the murder of Hotsin. The loss of Hotsin proved, however, irreparable to the cause he represented. An intriguing noble Tongcho, brother of the Empress Tongchi, seized the reins of power. Yuen Chow was compelled to flee. The Empress Hochi—who had previously got rid of her rival, Empress Tongchi—and her son Pienti were thrown into prison and poisoned. Hochi was powerless in the hands of Tongcho, and her only weapon was to exclaim, "Just Heaven will avenge us." Tongchi's son was proclaimed Emperor as Hienti, and the new reign began in the year A.D. 191.

During the thirty years that Hienti was nominally Emperor, he was only a puppet in the hands now of one intriguing minister and again of another, while the country was distracted by the conflicting pretensions of several ambitious princes, each of whom aspired to found a dynasty in succession to the expiring one of the Hans. Prominent at first among these was Tongcho, who had placed Hienti on the

throne; but his enjoyment of power proved short-lived. His ambition and love of display brought him many rivals, and when he issued, in the Emperor's name, an order that all those who went to court should doff their bonnets in his presence, he added fuel to the flame of growing resentment at his pretensions. Prominent among his opponents was Tsow Tsow, who in the end triumphed over him, and obtained the upper hand in the Imperial Council. Tsow Tsow, who to a capacity for intrigue added a knowledge of war,* and a personal courage which marked him out as the ablest leader in the country, gradually collected in his hands all the administrative power, and Hienti found that in changing Tongcho for Tsow Tsow he had not become more independent, but had simply altered the name of his master.

If, however, the last of the Hans was powerless in the grasp of his minister, there were others reluctant to acquiesce in the supremacy of Tsow Tsow. Twenty years of constant warfare ensued from this cause, and Yuen Chow, Sunkiuen, and Lieoupi set up rival

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* Tsow Tsow was one of the most skilful generals China ever possessed. One of the articles of faith of the Chinese soldier is that "God fights with the big batallions." Throughout Chinese history the one essential to success, whether against a band of rebels or a foreign foe, is to have the larger army. Wherever this rule is departed from, and it only occurs a few times in the course of Chinese history, we may assume that the general's merit was conspicuous. Tsow Tsow in most of his great victories commanded an army numerically inferior to that of his opponent. In the presence of the enemy and in the thickest of the fight he was always cool and collected. His presence of mind enabled him to often snatch victory from the point of defeat, and to turn the confidence of a victorious enemy unexpectedly into the panic of surprise and disaster.—Mailla.

parties in different portions of the realm. The first named had himself proclaimed Emperor, but his success fell short of his expectations. His overthrow by Tsow Tsow, and early death, left the three other princes to settle the Empire between them; and although Tsow Tsow was uniformly successful in the field he had to content himself with one-third of the state. Each of these princes Tsow Tsow, Sunkiuen and Lieoupi became at a later period the founder of a dynasty, and when Tsow Tsow died his position was inherited by his son Tsowpi. This event occurred in the year A.D. 220; whereupon Hienti, apprehensive of violence, abdicated in favour of Tsowpi. Hienti retired into private life as Prince of Chanyang, thus terminating the brilliant dynasty of the Hans which had ruled China for more than four hundred years with splendour and wisdom. Their triumphs in war, and the remarkable progress in material welfare made by China under their guidance, had raised the nation to the first rank among the peoples of the world. Chinese armies had marched under their banners across the continent of Asia, Yunnan had been made a Chinese province, Cochin China and Leaoutung vassal states; while the face of the country had been covered with populous cities and great public works—roads, canals, bridges and aqueducts—which still remain to testify to the glory of the Hans.

CHAPTER IX.

TEMPORARY DIVISION OF THE EMPIRE.

Three Emperors.—The Period of the Sankoue.—Chow, Ou and Wei.— Lieoupi.— Sunkiuen.— Tsowpi.— Advantages of last-named.—Chow Lieti.—Wars.—Lousun.—A Great Victory.—Defeat of Chow.—Tsowjoui.—Conquest of Leaoutung.—Ssemay.—Tsowfang.—Ssemachi.—Siege of Sinching.—Valour of its Commander, Changte.—His Ruse.—Successful.—Disgrace and Death of Defeated General.—Ssemachow.—Victories of Wei Generals.—Tsowmow.—His Murder.—Heouchow.—Last of the Later Hans of Chow.—Tengai.—Heouchow's Surrender.—Lieouchin's Proposition and Fate.—Triumph of Wei.—Fall of Chow.—Ssemaym.—Deposition of Wei Ruler.—Elevation of Ssemay's Grandson to the Imperial Dignity.—The First of the Later Tsins.

THE fall of the power of the Hans, and the disappearance of the main line of their dynasty in the mass of the people, whence five centuries previously it had sprung, left China split up into three independent* kingdoms. This fact not proving palatable to subsequent native historians, the acts of these three states have been classed together, and treated as if relating to one kingdom, and under the heading of the sixth dynasty. There can be no question that during this

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* The period of the Sankoue.

period, which extended over less than half a century, there were three distinct governments in China; and, as many subsequent events were clearly attributable to the occurrences of this time, it is necessary to unravel as best we can the intricacies of the mutual relations and foreign policy of the three contemporary and rival rulers. The first of these was known as the Later Hans, and held possession of the modern province of Szchuen with the capital at Chentu. Although exercising authority over a smaller extent of territory than either of the others, this family of the Later Hans on account of its semi-royal descent is the one which the court historians have since striven to alone recognise. The second, that of Ou, comprised five of the southern provinces with a capital at Ouchangfoo at one period, and at Nankin at another, and maintained its independence down to a later period than that of the Later Hans. The third, the kingdom of Wei, far larger in extent and including the most populous districts in China, embraced all the central and southern provinces, with a capital at Loyang, the recognised metropolis of the Empire.

The first ruler of the Later Hans was Lieoupi, already mentioned, who took the name of Chow Lieti, and who was descended in a direct line from the Han Emperor Kingti; while the general Sunkiuen, and Tsowpi, the son of Tsow Tsow, were the founders respectively of the kingdoms of Ou and Wei. It will be seen that the more powerful state of Wei gradually asserted its authority over the rest of China, and that

the triumph of the descendants of Tsow Tsow was only marred at the eleventh hour by the intrigue of a successful general.

The great advantage which Tsowpi enjoyed over his contemporaries was that of possessing the recognised capital. By this means he retained his hold upon the vassals and tributaries. The embassies from the princes of Central Asia, and, it cannot be doubted, the trade intercourse as well with the regions of the West, continued to proceed to Loyang, thus giving the Wei ruler a larger claim to general consideration. That claim, however, the court historians have persistently refused to admit.*

Chow Lieti, first Emperor of the Later Hans, had no sooner assumed the style of an independent prince than he occupied his mind with thoughts of vengeance for the ruin brought to the House of which he was a scion. His neighbour Sunkiuen, the ruler of the Ou kingdom, was an object of his special resentment, and, although advised that he had more danger to apprehend from Wei, and that it would be better to league himself with Ou against the more formidable enemy, he permitted his personal resentment to get the better of a conviction of political necessities. Rushing blindly into a war without due forethought or preparation, what reason was there to expect that the Fates would disentangle him from the consequences of his own blunders?

The gravity of the danger that threatened him

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* Mailla, vol. iv. p. 82.

forced Sunkiuen to accommodate his difficulties with Tsowpi. The latter was acknowledged as Emperor, and the former was confirmed in the possession of his dominions as Prince of Ou. Meanwhile the army of Chow Lieti had taken up a position on the frontier, menacing the existence of the state, and seeming to threaten to cut a road to its capital. Sunkiuen had the good fortune to possess a skilful general, Lousun, and the ability he displayed in defending the frontier proved a better ally than Tsowpi, who regarded both his neighbours with an eye of doubt. The campaign proved a lingering one. Twelve months were passed with the two armies facing each other, each waiting, before venturing to attack the other, for such favourable circumstances as never came. These Fabian tactics were mostly in favour of the force which was fighting on its own soil and with a friendly population at its back. When Chow Lieti's army was reduced by inaction, and dispirited by the failure to obtain any result, that of Lousun was still comparatively fresh and eager for the fray; and then Lousun resorted to all the strategy within his knowledge. A night attack in force, and at several points, carried everything before it. The best generals of Chow Lieti were either slain or taken prisoners; thousands of his soldiers fell on the field of battle, thousands more were captured, and all the baggage of the camp became the spoil of the victor. Chow Lieti himself barely escaped with his life from the scene of this crushing disaster, which in the stupefaction that fell upon him he could only attribute to the wrath of Heaven.

On the news of this victory Tsowpi at once increased his demands upon Sunkiuen, and the late opponents found in the pretensions of Wei a strong reason for forgetting their differences and combining together for mutual defence—the law of self-preservation again proving superior to every other. Chow Lieti never fully recovered the shock of his great defeat, and three years after his assumption of the Imperial title he died, leaving to his son pretensions greater than his actual power, and the legacy of a feud in which he must inevitably prove the weaker party. That son, Heouchow, began his reign in the year A.D. 223, when he was nearly seventeen years old. About the same time Tsowpi died, leaving his possessions to his brother Tsowjoui, so that of the three rivals Sunkiuen was now the sole survivor that remained. The moment appeared to him to be auspicious for making an attack on his northern neighbour's dominions. It never occurred to him that Tsowpi's lieutenants might prove more than a match for himself in the conduct of a campaign. From this fond delusion he was speedily awakened. Repulsed in two attempts to seize fortified towns, he was ignominiously defeated when he sought to retrieve his bad fortune in the open field.

And when the ruler of the Hans of Chow,* with the aid of the great captain Chukwoliang, strove to restore the balance of power, neither the advantage

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* The Later Hans were called the Hans of Chow, and their country was often spoken of as Chow.

obtained by a sudden attack nor the admitted superiority of the commander availed to produce a different result. The generals of Wei triumphed, in the most decisive manner, over those of both Ou and of Chow. A desultory war ensued, in which the successes were mostly on the side of Tsowjoui, and, whether owing to mismanagement or to the hard decree of fortune, both Ou and Chow met with only a long succession of checks and reverses. In the north, too, Tsowjoui was not less successful. Kongsunyuen, king of Leaoutung, incurred his resentment, and a large army under the command of Ssemay was sent against him. Kongsunyuen defended himself with resolution and obtained a slight success in the beginning of the struggle; but the ruler of Wei sending large reinforcements to his army in the field, Kongsunyuen was shut up in his capital and killed in an attempt to cut his way through the beleaguering lines. His capital was given over to the victorious soldiery to plunder, and the whole of Leaoutung became a province of the Wei kingdom. This decided and brilliant success gave Tsowjoui a more prominent place in the opinion of all his neighbours, but he did not live long to enjoy it. A few days after the return of the victorious general Ssemay, Tsowjoui died, leaving his throne to his nephew Tsowfang, a child eight years old. On his deathbed Tsowjoui exhorted Ssemay to be as faithful to his successor as he had always proved devoted to him (A.D. 239).

To Sunkiuen, who still survived as the last of the former rivals, the accession of this child appeared to

be the long-sought opportunity for establishing his power on a supreme basis. The skilful arrangements of the general Ssemay foiled his plans, and Sunkiuen retired baffled from the contest. Another war ensued from this with the ruler of Chow, but Heouchow proved successful in beating back from his frontiers the danger which threatened him, and for a time the state of Wei was divided in itself by the intrigues of Tsowchwang, a minister who attempted to seize the governing power. When Ssemay had curbed his pretensions and restored order, other disturbances followed. Several of the possessions of Sunkiuen were wrested from him, and when he died in A.D. 252 it was clear that the days of the kingdom of Ou were already numbered. About the same time also died the brave general Ssemay, to be succeeded in his position by his son Ssemachi.

Sunleang, Sunkiuen's son and successor, rushed by the rash advice of his general Chukwoko into a war with Wei. Seven months were wasted before the walls of Sinching, a small fortified town held by a garrison of three thousand men, and then Chukwoko was obliged to beat a hurried retreat with the loss of half his army. At one time it had looked as if Sinching would have had to open its gates to the invader, and it was only the fortitude and presence of mind of its commandant Changte which averted that result. For ninety days the siege had gone on, and the ramparts of Sinching had been pierced in numerous places, and several breaches lay gaping to the foe. In short Changte had done all that a good commander could,

and, as no relieving force was near, there was nothing more for him to do save to die as a brave man. At this extremity he had recourse as a last chance to the following ruse. He sent word to Chukwoko that he was willing to surrender Sinching without further resistance, if the act of surrender were postponed until the hundredth day, as "it was a law among the princes of Wei that the governor of a place which held out for a hundred days, and then surrendered with no prospect of relief visible, should not be considered as guilty." Chukwoko, already wearied by the protracted defence, readily accepted this offer, but his astonishment may be imagined when a few days later he found the ramparts and forts of Sinching assuming their original appearance. All the breaches were repaired, new gates were constructed, and fresh defensive works erected, and as these bulwarks appeared over the ruins of a three-month's siege the spirits of the garrison under their bold commander rose in proportion. When Chukwoko sent to ask what was the meaning of these proceedings, and how they were to be reconciled with the terms of the agreement, Changte sent the bold reply, "I am preparing my tomb, and to bury myself under the ruins of Sinching." Of such resolute valour, and indifference to death, the military records of China contain many examples; but very seldom has one shown such fertility of resource, and resolution not only to save personal honour, but also a charge of national importance as did Changte on this occasion.* The siege

* Maílla, vol. iv. pp. 117, 118.

of Sinching brought honour to Changte, and security to his state; but to Chukwoko it signified disgrace and death as an unsuccessful and consequently a criminal general.

Meanwhile a series of events in the internal history of Wei had led to the deposition of Tsowfang by the general Ssemachi, and the elevation of Tsowmow, another of the nephews of Tsowjoui, in his place. Ssemachi died shortly after this occurrence, but his influence and dominant position in the state did not pass out of his family. To Ssemachi succeeded his brother Ssemachow, and the real governing power in the country remained in his hands. The war between Wei and its southern neighbours still lingered on; but in the year A.D. 257 it took a more decisive form. The army of Ssemachow under the command of Wangki won several battles in the south with comparatively small loss, and the capture of the important town of Chowchun, with its garrison of one hundred and fifty thousand rebels, struck a heavy blow in favour of the pre-eminence of Wei. Ssemachow took all the credit of this result to himself, and in spite of the protests of Tsowmow caused himself to be proclaimed governor of the Empire with the title of Prince of Tsin. Tsowmow was not destitute of courage, and he resolved to overthrow by prompt action this too-powerful soldier. Taking a few companions into his personal confidence he proceeded to Ssemachow's palace with the intention of ridding the Empire of an ambitious subject. The project was a bold one, but it miscarried. There was, in truth, to be a deed of

blood that day, but Tsowmow himself was the victim, not Ssemachow.

Ssemachow then undertook the invasion of the kingdom of Chow, where Heouchow, the ruler of the Later Hans, still preserved the name and the dignity of the illustrious House from which he sprang. Tengai and the other Wei generals carried everything before them. A council of despair was held in the capital, and several propositions, some pusillanimous and others courageous, but all showing the desperate character of the situation, were mooted for the guidance of the Emperor. Heouchow accepted the suggestion of one of his ministers that the preferable alternative was to throw himself on the generosity of the Prince of Wei. His son Lieouchin, worthy heir of the characteristics of the great Vouti, declared that, "If we are without resources, and if there is no choice save to perish, we can at least die with honour. Let us march to meet the enemy with what may remain to us of brave men, and if our dynasty is on the point of extinction, let it finish only with our lives." To Heouchow, the timid, this advice was unpalatable, and he proceeded to grace the triumph of the victor by his own presence, while his son Lieouchin put an end to his existence with that of his family in the temple of his ancestors. It is in the act of Lieouchin rather than in the apathy of Heouchow, that the last scion of the great family of the Hans vanished from the gaze of his contemporaries, leaving a blank where once there had been the presence of a great name.

The war closed with the incorporation of the state

of Chow with that of Wei. The general Tengai wrote from the captured city of Chentu to Ssemachow exhorting him to prosecute without further delay the war with Ou, so that his triumph might be made complete by the double conquest of the two southern kingdoms, because as Tengai wrote with a truth and pregnancy applicable to all times and circumstances, "An army which has the reputation of victory flies from one success to another." Ssemachow did not adopt this advice and the conquest of Ou was put off for nearly twenty years. In A.D. 265 Ssemachow died, being succeeded by his son Ssemayen, who at once deposed the nominal Emperor Yuenti, and had himself proclaimed in his stead. A new dynasty, that of the Tsins, was declared, and Ssemayen became the first ruler of the line under the name of Chitsou Vouti. The rivalry of the three princes and generals who had divided the Empire of the Hans thus terminated in favour of that founded by Tsowpi, the son of Tsow Tsow; but in the end it lost the fruits of its policy to the grandson of the general Ssemay who had contributed so much to its success. The Tsins won the Empire by the sword, and so long as they retained the capacity to assert their power they maintained an admitted supremacy throughout the whole of the country.

CHAPTER X.

THE DYNASTY OF THE LATER TSINS.

Tsin Vouti.—Sunhow of Ou.—Embassy to Loyang.—Position of Vouti's Troops.—Ouchang.—Kiennie.—Death of Loukai.—The Yangtsekiang.—Wangsiun.—A Fleet.—Yanghou.—The Sienpi.—Revolt in Leaoutung.—Unsatisfactory Condition of Borders.—The Hoangho.—Bridge at Mongtsin.—Touyu.—Revolt in Ou.—Sunhow's Success.—Death of Yanghou.—Invasion of Ou.—Touyu.—Victories.—Battles of Kianling and Panpiao.—Surrender of Sunhow.—Incorporation of Ou.—Vouti becomes Addicted to Pleasure.—Five Thousand Female Comedians.—Death of Vouti.—Ssemachong.—Yangsiun.—The Emperor Hweiti.—The Empress Kiachi.—Murder of Yangsiuen.—General Confusion.—Mongkwan.—His Victories.—A Chinese Stilicho.—Lieouyuen.—Lieousong.—King of Han.—Death of Hweiti.—Hwaiti.—Successes of Han.—Capture of Loyang.—Emperor a Prisoner.—Insults to.—Murder of.—Capture of Changnan.—Mingti also Taken Prisoner and Murdered.—Several Emperors.—Disunion in Han.—Chow.—Luxury of Hans.—Amazons.—General Hwan Wen.—Extinction of Hans.—Yen and Tsin.—Moti.—Vouti II.—Great Victory.—Gewgen Tartars.—A Pirate.—First of the Khakhans.—Lieouyu.—His Early Life.—Defeats the Pirate Sunghen.—Further Successes.—Commander-in-Chief.—Prince of Song.—Wangchinou.—Campaign against Changnan.—Capture of.—Loss of.—A Reverse.—Murder of Emperor.—Kongti.—Deposition of.—Lieouyu declared Emperor.—End of the Tsins.

When Ssemayen exalted himself on the Dragon Throne and became the founder of a dynasty he took the title of Vouti, the warrior prince.* It will be

* A not unusual practice with the founder of a new dynasty.

borne in mind that at this period numerous wars, the machinations of years, and the gradual growth of an ambitious family, had prevented the extension of the authority of the Wei ruler through more than two-thirds of the Empire. It became the one object of Vouti's life to incorporate the independent kingdom of Ou in his dominions, but twenty years passed away before he compassed his purpose. The speedy conquest of Chow, and the fall of the representative of the Hans, created a great alarm in the bosom of Sunhow, Prince of Ou, and when Vouti seized the supreme power Sunhow sent an embassy to Loyang to congratulate him and to express a desire to become the vassal of the Tsins. Vouti received the ambassador with marked courtesy, but Sunhow was still hankering after the ambitious dreams of his father Sunkiuen. The supremacy of the Tsins was for the time incontestable; but there was disaffection in the land, and their rule might not prove of long duration. So it happened that when the envoy who came "whispering words of humbleness and peace" returned south of the Great River, Sunhow began to plot not merely for the preservation of his independence, but even for the subversion of the Tsins. In Kiangsi and Hoonan, among the reedy marshes of Fuhkien and the woody glens of Kwantung there was a furbishing of arms, and the grim expectation of coming battle disturbed the fishermen on Tunting, and the miners of Chowchow.*

* Tunting lake in Hoonan connected with the Yangtsekiang, and Chowchow, a town near the coal-mines in Northern Kwantung.

The strong positions held by the troops of Vouti both on the northern banks of the Yangtsekiang, and also in the western province of Szchuen, inspired a prudent caution, and reckless as Sunhow was disposed to be he long "let I dare not, wait upon I would." As a precautionary measure he removed his capital from Ouchang in the plains of Houkwang to Kiennie in the maritime province of Chekiang. This prudent alteration had been made on the recommendation of the able Loukai, but that wise minister did not live long to guide aright the policy of his master. His death in A.D. 269 deprived Sunhow of his mainstay, and left Ou a divided and headless state at the mercy of its powerful neighbour.

Meanwhile Vouti had been steadily drawing the toils tighter round Sunhow, whom he had marked as his prey. The insincerity of that prince's protestations of friendship had been made evident, and there was no valid reason why the task of uniting the Empire should be postponed in deference to a prince who was false and ambitious at the same time that he was cringing and destitute of courage. On all sides, therefore, Vouti's lieutenants were bestirring themselves, and preparing the legions that were to be launched across the Great River for the overthrow of a usurper and the annexation of his state. Along the upper course of the Kiang Wangsiun was busily constructing a fleet of war junks, from the woods of Szchuen, to sweep down on the unsuspecting and over-confident admirals of Sunhow, while Yanghou, the greatest commander of the age, spared no effort

to make the main attack successful. An attempt at a rising in Chow was suppressed in the summary manner that found favour in the eyes of Eastern despots, and a war, which calls for brief notice, with the Northern Sienpi was begun, but the successful result in the latter case proved only temporary.

In A.D. 270 the Sienpi under their king Toufachukineng invaded Chinese territory with a large force, and a general, Houliei, was sent to drive them back. A great battle ensued, in which the Chinese were victorious, but the commanders on both sides were among the slain.* A revolt in Leaoutung followed close on this incursion, of which the Sienpi were not slow to avail themselves. They returned in greater force, and retrieved in a second encounter their recent defeat. Several years were occupied in desultory and irregular fighting, during which the Chinese admit that "an infinity of soldiers" were slain. Their frontier officials strove, and not in vain, to set one tribe against another, and by this means, although no decisive result was obtained, the borders were kept in a fair state of security. At a later period, A.D. 281, the Sienpi renewed their raids, and a clan occupying the modern Manchuria carried its arms to the shores of the Gulf of Pechihli. So that on the whole these tribes must be held to have had rather the best of the contest during the reign of the first Tsin Emperor.

One of the most remarkable occurrences of this

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* Mailla, vol. iv. pp. 149, 150.

reign was the bridging of the great river Hoangho, a task until then considered impossible. The difficulty, and positive danger at many seasons, of crossing this great stream had at all times occupied the grave consideration of the government, and many schemes had been suggested for improving the means of communication between the provinces north of the Hoangho and those south of it. But none had produced any result. At last, in A.D. 274, an adventurous individual named Touyu came forward and offered to construct a bridge across the Hoangho if the Emperor would support his scheme. The project was brought before the Imperial Council, and, after some discussion, rejected as impossible, because, as these "wise men" naively put it, if the thing were feasible it would have been done by their ancestors. So far as the collective wisdom of the ministers could prevent the carrying out of a great work of public utility, the project of Touyu failed to obtain official patronage and sanction; but the bold engineer was not discouraged, and his frequent memorials moved the heart of the Emperor to give him permission to make the attempt. In a very few months Touyu threw a bridge across the Hoangho at Mongtsin,* thus connecting Honan with Shansi. Vouti came in person to see the wonderful work, and inaugurated its opening for the use of his subjects by ceremonies of an exceptional character. At this time Vouti is stated to have ruled his people

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* This bridge no longer exists. The state of the Hoangho is the most serious reflection on the present Government of China.

with a prudence and moderation that gained him all hearts, and certainly this useful work should not be placed last among the benefits he conferred upon his people.

In A.D. 272 Sunhow had been obliged to employ force in putting down a revolt within his dominions, and by rapid marching his general Loukang succeeded in overcoming all opposition before Vouti's general Yanghou, who had promised to afford the rebel assistance, could come up. A few years later Yanghou, having completed the scheme for the invasion of the states of Ou, died, to the great grief of all those over whom he had exercised authority; and the master whom he had served faithfully and for so many years caused a eulogium, cut in letters of gold on stone, to be erected to his memory, reciting his numerous virtues—at once a reward to the minister, and an exhortation to other officials to follow in his footsteps.

The year following Yanghou's death beheld the long-expected invasion of Ou on the eve of being put into practice. Five different corps from as many points were to attack Sunhow's dominions at the same time. One general carried everything before him between Henkiang and the Yangtsekiang; while Wangsiun descending that river with his fleet struck terror into the hearts of the people of Ou, who were quite unprepared for this unusual attack. In this emergency the only device they could think of was to throw chains across the river, but these Wangsiun forced with ease by using fire rafts. The whole

military and naval strength of the Tsins was, therefore, converging on the very heart of the dominions of the King of Ou, and the nearer the approach of the danger the less able did Sunhow appear to be to defend himself. Touyu, the engineer of the Mongtsin bridge, had been entrusted by Vouti with the chief command, and while his lieutenants were obtaining successes in other quarters of the field, he won the great victory of the war near the city of Kianling, which fell to his arms without resistance. The effect of this was enhanced by a further battle won at Panpiao in Kiangsu, when Changti, the most resolute of Sunhow's remaining generals, met a soldier's death, fighting bravely at the head of his men.

After these disasters unrelieved by the smallest ray of success, with his fleet destroyed and his armies shattered, Sunhow came to the resolution that it was time to abandon his dreams of ambition and to make up his mind that the supremacy of the Tsins could no longer be disputed. He, therefore, gave himself up to Wangsiun, the general who, by constructing a fleet in the conquered province of Chow, had done so much towards deciding the fortune of this war. This event took place in the year A.D. 280, twenty years after the incorporation of Chow, and it added to the Tsin Empire a kingdom of vast dimensions. Ou at this time comprised four large provinces, subdivided into forty-three departments, containing five hundred and twenty-three towns and villages, and a standing force of two hundred and thirty thousand men. This large territory was re-incorporated with the rest of

China, and passed under the same laws as those which had been imposed elsewhere by the Tsins.

Having thus accomplished the object of his life Vouti showed an inclination to pass the remainder of his days in peace. He reduced, against the advice of many of his ministers, his standing army to the lowest dimensions, and he also gave himself up to the indulgence of pleasures, which in his earlier days he had regarded with stoical indifference. It almost seemed as if his mind, having been braced to a great effort, relaxed after the strain had been removed, and refused to recover the mastery over his mundane actions. Be that as it may, however, the last ten years of his life were passed in a different manner to his earlier ones. After the conquest of Ou numerous customs were introduced which ill accorded with the sobriety of the northern races. A band of comedians, composed of five thousand females who had been wont to amuse the leisure of Sunhow, was brought to the capital, and established in Vouti's palace. His principal pastime became to spend his time in their midst, and to drive in a car drawn by sheep through the gardens of the royal residence. There was much in this to shock the strict simplicity of Chinese life, and while his great qualities are not ignored the native historian visits with censure this weakness of the Emperor. The close of his reign was after a different fashion, therefore, to the commencement, and although the founder of the later Tsin dynasty he was the first to exemplify the faults which would entail its ruin.

In A.D. 290 Vouti fell ill and died, having reigned

over Wei and Chow for fifteen years, and over the whole Empire for ten. He was succeeded by his son Ssemachong,* who was at this time about thirty years of age. On his deathbed Vouti left the principal part in the administration to Yangsiun, an ambitious but weak-willed personage, more anxious to advance his own interests than those of the Tsins.

Ssemachong took the name, on mounting the throne, of Hweiti, and his first anxiety was caused by the ambition and intrigues of the minister Yangsiun, but these were of slight importance in comparison with the sinister intentions and criminal designs of his own wife, the Empress Kiachi. Resolved to avenge herself for slights which she conceived had been offered her during the reign of Vouti, Kiachi breathed vengeance against that ruler's widow Yangchi and the minister Yangsiun, nor did she rest content until her wrath had been gratified. The weakness and vacillation of Yangsiun, who could have averted the catastrophe by exhibiting ordinary courage and promptitude, played the game into the hands of Kiachi, whose partizans attacked the minister in his palace, and put him and his followers to the sword. The Empress Yangchi was deposed from her position, and relegated to the ranks of the people. Kiachi appointed other ministers, but these soon forgot the lessons of pru-

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* The "Wang Sing Tong Pou" makes Ssemachong the thirteenth son of Vouti. Mailla gives his age as thirty-one on succeeding to the throne and forty-eight at his death. This is hardly likely to have been the case, and it is more probable from Yangsiun's appointment as "Governor of the Empire" that Ssemachong was much younger.

dence, and thought their chief duty was to establish a party of their own. The fall of Yangsiun changed only the name of the dominant minister, and the Emperor, a miserable and harmless prince, became a mere puppet in the hands of a wicked wife and a designing statesman.

This state of things in the capital invited confusion throughout the realm, and rendered it impossible for the border lieutenants to resent with the necessary vigour the insults which the neighbouring peoples dared to offer the national dignity. Risings on a small scale took place, and remaining unrepressed speedily assumed larger proportions. The generals sent against them passed their time in quarrelling among themselves as to which should have precedence of the other, and when, their troops disgusted and their supplies exhausted, they hurled themselves against the confident rebels it was only to incur a defeat, which had been rendered almost inevitable by their dissension and misconduct. More significant, though of less immediate import, some of the Tartar kings were extending their authority far to the west, over states nominally Chinese vassals, and all the court did was to say that these places were too remote for any interest to be taken in their fate. Yet the key of the whole situation lay in those northern and north-western provinces, whence conquerors of China have sometimes, and devastators of her fair plains have always, come in hordes prolific of hardy warriors. Before this Tsin dynasty had been fairly placed on the throne it was made clear that the causes of its fall

were already in operation. Its vitality had never been of the most vigorous kind, and the folly of Vouti's successors made it assume a stunted growth.

In the midst of a world of disunion, and at a time when the bonds of society are loosened, it often happens that a single human genius appears upon the scene, and by some brilliant act exposes the full weaknesses and decline of the age, at the same time that he revives the memory of former vigour. The truth of this was exemplified in China at this time by the deeds of Mongkwan, a eunuch in the service of the Empress Kiachi. When all the leading generals had been defeated, and the court was reduced to despair, Mongkwan was entrusted with an army as a last resource. His acts more than justified the choice. Although in the depth of winter he marched against one of the rebels, defeated him in several encounters, and finally crushed him in a great battle, when his whole army surrendered. Thus did the Chinese Stilicho restore in one district the waning authority of Hweiti. But Mongkwan could not act everywhere, and in all other quarters of the Empire it went hard with the representatives of the Tsins. Neither the tranquillity of the realm nor the interests of the dynasty were promoted by the murder of the heir-apparent, who was poisoned at the order of Kiachi.

In the year A.D. 304 the Hiongnou were divided into five clans dependent on the Chinese government, and a number of them had been distributed throughout the Empire. Lieouyuen had been appointed chief over them, and he and his family, that of the Lieous,

occupy a prominent place in the events which happened during the closing years of Hweiti's reign. Lieouyuen's son Lieousong had had all the advantages of a Chinese education, and in addition to the martial qualities of the Tartar he possessed the scientific knowledge and other accomplishments of the Chinese. These Tartars had not forgotten the traditions of independent authority which still survived in their history, and seeing the disunion prevailing among the members of the royal family they resolved to turn the opportunity to their own personal advantage. Skilfully concealing their plans they claimed to be working for the common good, and identified themselves on the first occasion with the party of the Emperor. But after a show of friendship they withdrew to Leaoutung where they established an independent authority and Lieouyuen was proclaimed king. Not content with this he laid claim to the Empire as the representative in the female line of the Hans, and assumed the title of King of Han.

The disorders in the Empire had now reached their height. Hweiti was compelled to flee from his capital which was plundered and given to the flames, but the weak king did not even then make any effort to shake off the tyranny of those who, possessed of his person, ruled in his name but only for their private ends. His death, in A.D. 306, was a happy release from a state which possessed no meaning and a situation full of anxiety without any compensating advantages. His brother Ssemachi succeeded him as the Emperor Hwaiti, and at first promise was afforded of

an improvement in the state of affairs. At the least, it could not become much worse.

Hwaiti began his reign with the best intentions, and with a resolve to personally attend to the cares of government. Unfortunately the situation was grave, and required acts, not intentions. Lieouyuen and his son Lieousong, with their pretensions to the Empire, and their established authority, were steadily encroaching towards the south, and their course was not to be stayed by either the virtues or the promises of the Emperor. Lieouyuen and his generals advanced to a considerable distance south of Leaoutung before their career was momentarily arrested by Wangsiun, the general who thirty years before had constructed the fleet on the Yangtse for the conquest of Ou. But the same year which beheld this ray of hope for the Tsins also witnessed the appearance before the gates of Loyang of a large and victorious army under the King of Han. On this occasion indeed it was repulsed, but the wave was only checked not rolled back. The next year Lieouyuen resumed the war, which he conducted with not less success than moderation. Several fortresses were taken, and one great victory ushered in the new campaign, which again closed with a repulse of the Han troops under the walls of the capital. The Tsin general on this occasion skilfully availed himself of the division of his opponent's army into two bodies by a river to crush one with superior numbers. But this was only a single success. Elsewhere the Han troops had been completely victorious, and they only withdrew for the

purpose of making a more decisive advance on the next occasion.

Lieouyuen's death, and his desire to leave his throne to an elder son threatened the newly-formed Han kingdom with serious trouble, for Lieousong, who had taken so prominent a part in the wars of the period, refused to forfeit what he held to be his right. Fortunately for the cohesion of his people he proved strong enough to make good his pretensions, and, having slain his two elder brothers and their chief partizans, he caused himself to be proclaimed King of Han. These changes occupied the greater portion of the year A.D. 310. In the following year he resumed the enterprise against Hwaiti and marched his armies on Loyang. On this occasion the capital of the Tsins fell to its northern conqueror, and Hwaiti fled from his palace in disguise. He was discovered and brought back to grace the triumph of the victor.* Having pillaged Loyang, and executed Ssemachuen, the heir-apparent, Lieousong's general carried off Hwaiti to Pingyang in Shensi, his master's capital. There Hwaiti was placed under strict surveillance, and his distressed people chose as governor of the Empire during his absence his second son Ssematoan, and concentrated their shattered forces at Mongching in Kiangnan.† These preparations, and the union which at last came in the face of disaster,

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* Hwaiti is considered the first Chinese Emperor to have fallen, while living, into the hands of a conqueror; he was certainly the first to surrender to a foe who was not a native of China.

† Kiangnan, it need hardly be said, is now represented by the two provinces, Kiangsu and Ganhoei.

did not deter the warriors of Han from prosecuting their incursions against the defenceless people of Tsin. The same year that beheld the surrender of Loyang and the carrying-off of Hwaiti to Pingyang, witnessed the capture and sack of Changnan, where several of the princes of the reigning House were taken and forthwith executed.

After two years' captivity, Lieousong resolved to rid himself of the presence of his prisoner Hwaiti, and he availed himself of the opportunity of a defeat inflicted upon his troops by a neighbouring Tartar chief to offer the greatest insult in his power to this representative of fallen majesty, and then to crown the outrage with his murder. Dressed in black, the Tsin Emperor waited at table on his Tartar conqueror, and then on a flimsy charge, of which not a tissue of proof was afforded, he was led to execution. Upon the news reaching Changnan the ministers proclaimed, A.D. 313, Ssemaye, Hwaiti's next brother, Emperor under the style of Mingti. The new monarch brought no change to the waning fortunes of the Tsins. During the four short years of his reign the troubles in the Empire became worse instead of better, and when he had been three years on the throne the Han generals again appeared before Changnan, which had partly risen from its ruins, and captured it after a show of resistance. Mingti was conveyed to Pingyang in the same manner as Hwaiti, and after a year's imprisonment, during which he was subjected to numerous indignities, he also was executed. For the second time in the course of a few years was the

melancholy spectacle afforded of a Chinese Emperor being compelled to perform menial services for the amusement or glorification of a barbarian potentate.

To Mingti succeeded four Emperors* whose reigns extending over a period of twenty-eight years call for no detailed description. Yuenti removed his capital from Changnan to Kienkang, the modern Nankin, thus obtaining a temporary immunity from insult. In the same year the Han king Lieousong died, leaving to his son Lieousan the dominions which had been won by his own intrepidity. Lieousong's great qualities are clearly shown by what he accomplished. He was the first of the foreign† rulers to engage in a war with, and to defeat the Chinese with their own weapons.

His death, however, brought numerous troubles upon his people. Lieousan reigned only a few weeks, and an ambitious minister endeavoured to establish his personal authority. It was not until the next year that the general Lieouyao succeeded in restoring order, when he was proclaimed King of Han. In the confusion the capital, Pingyang, had been sacked, and the seat of government was then transferred to Changnan. The unsettled state of the country during this period may be accurately inferred from the frequent changes in the place of the capitals. Shortly after his removal to Changnan Lieouyao altered the name of his family from

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* Their names were Yuenti, A.D. 318; Mingti II., 324; Chingti, 327; and Kangti, 344. The last-named reigned only two years, dying in 346.

† Foreign, that is non-Chinese, or "barbarian."

Han to Chow; and as if to proclaim his hostility to the Chinese he placed Mehe, the celebrated king of the Hiongnou, at the head of his ancestors. Fortunately for the Tsins this formidable northern Power split up into two parts, each hostile to the other, and thus afforded a brief breathing space to the Emperors who nominally governed China. Of this Mingti the Second strove to avail himself as best he could, but he only lived three years to give effect to a policy which aimed at restoring his authority through profiting by the weakness and disunion of his opponents.

Although not recognised as Chinese sovereigns the Han kings of the north ruled over large districts of the Empire, and included among their subjects a majority of Chinese by race and associations. They imitated as closely as they could the practices of the greater Emperors, and their palaces and court ceremonials were in exact imitation of what prevailed at the capital under the great Hans. In one palace we are told more than ten thousand persons resided, and in China in those days the palace was not only a barrack and a fortress, but included a park and pleasure grounds as well. The most striking and original of their customs was the band of Amazons, who were specially attached to the person of the ruler. These were mounted on excellent Tartar horses, and dressed in the magnificent fashion that becomes the bodyguard of a great ruler.* These luxuries, and this imitation of Sardanapalus would have been more natural, and

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* Pauthier, p. 272.

less exposed to censure, if there were not the unanswerable contemporary criticism recorded in history that the people were ground down under the oppression of their rulers, and that the poverty of the country formed a striking contrast to the luxury and dissipation of the court. Among all the rulers who divided China between them there was not one of any worth as regards public spirit. They were all adventurers in one sense of the word, enjoying the day and reckless of the morrow. The Chinese moralist in his disapprobation of a standard of living and of governing so far removed from his maxims has had to create a semi-mythical princedom of Ching, where at least the ancient virtues and sobriety of life were practised during these dark ages of his history.

When the boy Kangti died, after having held possession of the throne for two years, his son, an infant named Moti, was elected his successor.* During the life of this young ruler his mother held the reins of authority, and, as if in mockery of the rampant evils in the state, the chronicles contain nothing but the record of how much the qualities and virtues of this prince were in excess of his years. The trite observations of these sciolists did not add much to the removal of national evils, and the golden promise of the ruler's younger days afforded no remedy for a crisis pregnant with danger to the permanent interests of the nation.

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* It is as unnecessary to describe the events of the reigns of these late rulers as of the earlier ones. Their names and dates of accession were as follows: Moti, A.D. 345; Gaiti, 362; Tiyeh, 367; Kien Venti, 371; and the second Vouti, 373.

The skill of a general named Hwan Wen shed lustre on the military annals of Moti's reign. He defeated in a pitched battle the army of the Prince of Han, who had in turn become the victim of the corruption of the age. Very soon the disintegrating causes at work in the region brought under a single sway by the ability of the Lieou family clearly revealed themselves, and the formidable military power which had been created in the north, and which threatened to destroy the Tsins, was dissolving again into its component parts. The revival of military capacity among the lieutenants of the Emperor, and the skill of Hwan Wen in particular, enabled the Tsins to profit to a great extent from the disunion and strife prevalent among the chiefs of Han, who all wished to be first, and have precedence of the others. So it was that in A.D. 352 the proud edifice erected by Lieouyuen and his son Lieousong fell finally to the ground, and the great family which had contested on equal terms with the Tsins disappeared from its place among the rulers, and became practically extinguished. It must not be assumed that all the advantage of this change went to the Emperor, for two new principalities, those of Yen and Chin, rose on the ruins of the Han domination.

At the age of sixteen Moti began to reign for himself, and continued to do so during the three remaining years of his life. The successes of Hwan Wen continued, and tended to restore the fading reputation of the Emperor. Moti's death arrested the career of progress, and the short life of his successor, Gaiti, did

not make the prospect of the Tsins any the brighter. When Gaiti died, after holding the sceptre during four short years, his brother Yti, or Tiyeh, succeeded him. The general Hwan Wen, whose abilities had been an element of strength to his predecessors, was seized by the demon ambition, and deposed Yti after he had occupied the throne for five years. In Yti's place Hwan Wen put Kien Venti, but he accepted the charge with hesitation. Fearful of the responsibility, and trembling at the prospect of danger, Kien Venti was out of his sphere on the Dragon Throne. It was indeed a happy release for him when he was removed from a world of care and uncertainty. There is no knowing what part Hwan Wen meditated playing in the regulation of the affairs of the state at this critical conjuncture, but a greater power than his will intervened, and after a short illness he died from the effects of a prolonged debauch.

Kien Venti was followed, A.D. 373, by his son Ssemachangming, a boy of ten years old, who on his assumption of the supreme dignity took the proud name of Vouti. His reign showed a considerable revival of power, and when Foukien, the principal of the northern rulers, threatened to overrun his territories Vouti marched boldly to encounter him, and obtained a brilliant success over his opponent. After his defeat Foukien's own partizans turned upon him and caused him to be strangled in his residence. Vouti appears to have thought that with this achievement he had done sufficient, and retiring to his palace gave himself up to an unbridled course of pleasure. Having

offered a slight to one of his wives she took summary vengeance for the wrong by smothering, under a bed, her lord and master whilst in a state of intoxication. So died the Emperor Vouti the Second after a reign of twenty-five years, which beheld one victory on a large scale that might have been made the stepping-stone to greater results.*

The twenty-two years of his son Ganti's reign would have been void of interest and importance were it not for the first appearance of the man who was to regenerate the Empire and to raise China, if only for a brief space, from the abyss into which she had descended. In the north a new enemy showed themselves in the Gewgen Tartars, and in the south the daring expeditions of the pirate Sunghen spread terror and desolation along the banks of the great rivers which were the scene of his activity.

The Gewgen† or Juju, as they were sometimes called, occupied the same relative position to the Emperor that the Hiongnou and Sienpi had previously, and at this time their military vigour being at its height they succeeded in establishing their own authority on the northern skirts of the Empire. Their chief, Chelun, assumed in A.D. 402 the higher title of Kohan, or Khakhan,‡ a name which eight centuries later acquired terrible significance in the hands of the Mongols.

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* Among the notable occurrences of this reign was the freezing of the Hoangho in a single night.—Mailla, vol. iv. p. 437.

† See interesting notes by the Editor in Mailla, vol. iv. pp. 521–522 and 563–566.

‡ Great Lord.

It was at this conjuncture that a man named Lieou-yu, a child of the people, raised himself from the class in which he was born by evincing capacity of no common order. Deserted by his parent through poverty he was brought up on the charity of others, and from his earliest years was remarkable for his quickness in learning. The necessity of making his livelihood compelled him for a time to follow the humble trade of shoe-making, but he chafed at the monotony of his occupation. Feeling within him the instincts of a soldier he seized the first opportunity to adopt the profession of arms, in which he showed such proficiency that he was at once entrusted with a small independent command. It was against the pirate Sunghen that he earned his first laurels. During three years he was constantly engaged in opposing, and sometimes in forestalling, the descents made by that leader. The credit* of Sunghen's final overthrow does not indeed belong to Lieouyu, but it was he who first broke the reputation of the pirate, and shattered the power of his force by repeated successes. After this introduction to military life, Lieou-yu's promotion was rapid. He led the Emperor's armies on numerous occasions; and, having overthrown a formidable rebel named Hwanhiuen in a battle which was fought with a smaller force both on land and on water, Ganti could only manifest his sense

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* Sinking, governor of Linhai, surprised Sunghen and inflicted a great defeat upon him. Sunghen, despairing of escape, threw himself into the sea and was drowned.

of the high service rendered by nominating him commander-in-chief of all the forces of the Empire.

Lieouyu showed no falling-off in either ability or energy, because he had attained the summit of a soldier's ambition. Marching from one province to another he repressed sedition and restored the blessings of a settled rule; and was fast giving reality to the theoretical claims of the Emperor to obedience. In the course of his expeditions he came into contact with Topa, Prince of Wei, a district north of the Hoangho. This prince having refused permission to Lieouyu's troops to march through his territory incurred his resentment. Lieouyu forced the passage of the Hoangho, routed the army of Wei, while one of his lieutenants marched on Changnan, the capital of the newly-formed principality of Chin. The expedition against Changnan was commanded by a resolute officer named Wangchinou,* who, having conveyed his force as far towards its destination by water as was possible, caused his ships to be cast adrift. Addressing his soldiers he said: "We have neither provisions nor supplies; and the current of the Weiho bears away from us the barks in which we came. But let us beat the enemy, and while covering ourselves with glory we shall regain a hundredfold everything we have lost. If on the other hand we are conquered, death for us all is inevitable. To conquer or to die, that is our lot; go and prepare yourselves to march against the

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* This brave general was assassinated the next year by a colleague jealous of his fame.

enemy." The result of the campaign was in proportion to the fortitude of the commander. Changnan surrendered, and the Prince of Chin was executed as a rebel. Lieouyu arrived hard upon the heels of his victorious troops, and made preparation for extending still further his conquests. At this moment he was recalled to the capital, and his further advance was suspended. During his absence Changnan and all the recent conquests were lost, and a great reverse was inflicted on the arms of the Empire. In this year Lieouyu, dissatisfied with the conduct of Ganti, who had only raised him to the third rank among princes, as Prince of Song, caused the Emperor to be strangled, and named his brother successor under the style of Kongti (A.D. 418).

Kongti reigned less than two years, being then deposed by the man who had set him up. The change was effected in the most formal manner. Kongti resigned a position which he felt incapable of retaining, and the ambitious Lieouyu assumed what he had long coveted. In a field they erected a scaffold, and on it they placed a throne, from which Kongti descended to give place to the Prince of Song. Before the assembled thousands of Kienkang, and in the presence of the great officials, Kongti then paid homage to Lieouyu*; and in this act the dynasty of the Tsins

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* The Emperors of China wore and still wear a cap or crown with twelve pendants. The assumption of this crown formed the principal portion of the coronation service. Its shape was peculiar. Round in the front, it was straight behind, and was ornamented with one hundred and forty-four precious stones. The pendants

reached its consummation. Their rule had extended over one hundred and fifty-five years, and there had been fifteen Emperors of the name; but on the whole no family with less pretensions to the right of government has ever lorded it over the docile people of China. The impression they leave on the mind is as vague and indistinct as the part they played in the history of their age (A.D. 420).

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consisted of strings of pearls, four of which hung over the eyes for the purpose, it was said, of preventing the Emperor seeing those who were brought before him for trial. See Mailla, vol. iv. p. 69.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SONG AND THE TSI RULERS.

Kaotsou.—Division of Empire.—Six Kingdoms.—Imperial Authority Only a Seventh.—Murder of Kongti.—Character of Kaotsou.—Chowti.—Topasse of Wei.—Successes of Wei.—Siege of Houlao.—Maotetso.—Gallant Defence.—Deposition of Chowti.—His Murder.—Wenti.—Punishes Murderers of his Brother.—Topatao.—Hia.—General Hikin.—Gankiai.—His Valour.—Failure of Hikin.—Gewgen Tartars.—Topatao Most Powerful Prince in China.—Honan.—A Disputed Province.—The Hoangho.—War.—Taoyenchi.—Gankiai's Successes.—Triumph of Wei.—Tantaotsi.—A Victory.—Thirty Combats.—Embassies to Topatao.—Losses of Wenti.—Revolts.—Pretenders.—Execution of Tantaotsi.—Wenti's Acts.—Topatao Extirpates Buddhism.—War Again Breaks out.—Doubtful Victories.—Siege of Hiuy.—Tsangchi.—Murder of Topatao.—Murder of Wenti.—A Parricide.—Vouti.—Revolt of Lieoutan.—Fiti.—Massacres.—A Savage.—Murdered.—Mingti.—Small Improvement.—Murders Fourteen of his Nephews and his Brothers.—Fiti II.—Murdered.—Siaotaoching.—Chunti.—End of the Song Dynasty.—Tsi Dynasty.—Kaoti.—His Reign.—"Gold as Common as Earth."—Defence of Chowyang and Kiuchan.—Vouti of the Tsis.—Wars with Wei.—A Dynasty in Power, "not by Merit but by Force."—Intermarriage of Blood Relations.—Siaochao.—Siaolun.—Mingti.—Topa becomes Yen.—Change of Capital.—Assassination of Siaoy.—Paokwen.—Hoti.—Siaoyen the Avenger.—Fall of the Tsis.—Murder of Hoti.—Wine before Gold.

When Lieouyu assumed the Imperial dignity in the year A.D. 420, and proclaimed himself by the name of

Kaotsou the founder of the Song dynasty, China was still as a house divided against itself. Six kingdoms* had been established within the borders of the northern provinces, and each aspired to bring its neighbours to its feet, and to figure as the regenerator of the Empire. At the least, their strength not being of a formidable character, their weakness constituted an efficient defence against each other, and when all were decrepit there was safety in an incapacity for offence. The new ruler did not possess the means of giving reality to his pretensions of authority over these states, to which his own did but add a seventh competitor; and, although the fact is disguised as much as possible, the Songs were never more than one ruler among many, and their government always that of only a small section of the Chinese nation.

As the general of the later Tsins Kaotsou had shown great skill, and obtained many successes; but during his brief reign the opportunity did not present itself of following them up by any fresh triumph. The only event of any importance was the murder of the deposed Emperor Kongti, and this circumstance is only vested with interest for the reason that Kongti refused "to drink the waters of eternal life,"† as being in opposition to the principles of his religion.‡ This

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* The names of these were Wei, ruled by a dynasty of the Tartar family of Topa; Sitsin, or Western Tsins, by a chief named Kifochipan; Hia, by Helienpopo; Yen, by Fongpo; the Northern Leang, by Mongsun; and the Western Leang, Sileang, by Lisiun.

† The Chinese poetical expression of putting an end to one's existence.

‡ He was a Buddhist, or believer in Fo.

is the first, and indeed the only, instance in history of a Chinese ruler violating the customs of the nation by refusing to acquiesce in the inevitable. Kongti was thereupon murdered in his palace by the guard in whose custody he had been placed.

Kaotsou enjoyed possession of the throne for no more than three years. That he possessed many sterling qualities is not to be denied. His frugality and attention to his duties were most worthy of being commended; and the courage which he evinced on the field of battle was well calculated to have produced great results in an age more remarkable for the practice of chicane than for the manifestation of the qualities of a soldier. His kindness and devotion to the foster-mother who had nourished him, and who had lived long enough to see Kaotsou on the throne, were most exemplary, and received the eulogium of his countrymen. On the other hand he was unfortunate in not coming to the front until well advanced in life, and the prudence obtained only with the experience of years made him loth to endanger what he possessed by striving to attain the wider authority with which, when a younger man, he would alone have rested satisfied.

The reign of the next Emperor Chowti, Kaotsou's eldest son, would not call for notice were it not for the deeds of the northern kingdom of Wei, the ruler of which well saw in the death of Kaotsou a favourable opportunity for resuming the operations which had been suspended in deference to the military skill of that prince. The glimpse that is obtained of

Topasse, the king of Wei, shows him to have been a man of exceptional talent and energy. At the great council of war, which he held on the eve of the invasion of the Song territories, he propounded the question whether the enterprise should be begun by attacking some fortified place or by overrunning the open country. The former course was adopted mainly on the advice of Hikin, and under the command of this leading general of the period several successes were obtained by the Wei troops. It was not, indeed, until they appeared before the walls of Houlao, a small fortress defended by a brave officer named Maotetso, that their career was in any degree arrested. Topasse sent his best troops to the assistance of Hikin, and came in person to encourage his army with his presence; but Maotetso relaxed in no degree the vigilance with which he defended his post. His skill and valour baffled the flower of the army, and the most skilful of the generals, of Topasse during seven months, and when at length Houlao surrendered the conquerors won nothing but a pile of ruins. Topasse died shortly afterwards from the hardships he had endured at, and the chagrin caused by, the siege of this place; but at all events he has secured a durable place in history by the magnanimity, not often met with in Asian annals, which he evinced in the honourable reception he accorded the gallant Maotetso.

This disastrous war was the only event which marked Chowti's reign of one year. From the first it had been plain that he possessed neither the

capacity nor the desire to well govern his people. He gave himself up to amusement, and neglected all public business. The nobles and great officials thought that it would be better to check his course with as little delay as possible, and with Tantaotsi* at their head they deposed him, putting his brother in his place. Knowing well that there was no safety for themselves or for the nation in a deposed prince who preserved the desire for power, they secretly caused Chowti to be put to death, thus relieving themselves from further apprehension on that score.

Although profiting by their deed, one of the first acts of Wenti, the new ruler, was to punish the murderers of his brother. In this has been seen an instance of fraternal affection; but, perhaps, it might be taken with more truth as showing the fears of the ruler, who saw in the persons of these deposers and executors of a king the ever-present wardens of the peoples' rights. Apart from this act, which was viewed at the time as to be commended rather than condemned even by those who had applauded the fall of Chowti, so fickle a thing is the public mind, Wenti began his reign under the fairest auspices. On his side there appears to have been the best intentions, and as to the people their hopes led them to augur the things which they most desired.

Topasse, of Wei, had been succeeded by his son Topatao, a man neither less capable nor ambitious than his father. In A.D. 426 he resolved to attack

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* According to Du Halde, vol. i. p. 379.

and, if possible, conquer the dominions of Hia which had just lost their ruler; and with that object he despatched a large army across the Hoangho under the command of Hikin, the same general who had conducted the siege of Houlao. At first the career of this army was unopposed. Town surrendered after town at the mere sight of the invader, and the troops of Hia never ventured to meet those of Hikin in the field. It was only when Hikin had advanced to a considerable distance from his base, and began to suffer from the want of provisions that the Hia forces rallying took fresh courage and ventured to engage the invaders of their country. Hikin was obliged to confine himself to his camp which he fortified to the best of his military knowledge, and where he prepared to offer a stout resistance. The day arrived, however, when his stock of supplies was completely exhausted, and the soldiers had no alternative between surrender and cutting their way through the enemy. In these straits Hikin's fortitude did not shine with so bright a glow as that of Gankiai, who scouted all idea of surrender, and led a fierce attack upon the beleaguering army. In this battle the army of Wei was completely victorious, and Gankiai had the honour of taking the Prince of Hia prisoner with his own hand. Gankiai received all the credit of this victory, which irritated Hikin so much that he resolved at all hazards to perform some brilliant action which should eclipse the feat of his colleague whose name and deed were now on the tongues of all men. Partly no doubt by his own carelessness, and also to be attributed

in some degree to the tyrannical treatment of his soldiers in contravention of the regulations in force at all times in the Chinese army, which disgusted every-one under his command, Hikin failed in his great design. Instead of surpassing Gankiai by a fresh victory, he demonstrated the marked superiority of that officer by incurring a defeat. He marched on Pingleang, the Hia capital, as a conqueror, but it was only as a prisoner that he could obtain admission.

The next year to that which witnessed this campaign against Hia saw the Wei troops engaged in an arduous war against the Gewgen Tartars. There was little fighting, as these tribes retired into the desert on the approach of the regular troops, but such as it was, was wholly in favour of Topatao, now the most powerful prince in China, and a much greater personage than the Song Emperor himself. Indeed so completely did he overshadow the nominal ruler of the Empire that a collision between them sooner or later was seen to be inevitable, and each had been long preparing himself for the struggle. It was Wenti who first threw down the glove, but Topatao showed no hesitation in picking it up.

The great province of Honan, lying south of the Hoangho, and to the north-west of the Song capital,* had been overrun and annexed by Wei in the course of the campaign in the reign of Chowti. Wenti resolved, in A.D. 430, to attempt its reconquest. For that purpose he assembled an army of fifty thousand

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* The modern Nankin.

men, and concluded a defensive and offensive alliance with Hia against the common foe. Before ordering the advance of his army, part of which was to be conveyed in boats up the Hoangho, Wenti sent an embassy to the court of Topatao, requesting him to hand over all that part of Honan which lies south of the Yellow River. Topatao's reply was dignified and to the point. "I was not out of my teens when I heard it said on all sides that Honan belonged to my family. Go and tell your master, that if he comes to attack me or mine I shall defend myself; and even if he succeed in seizing this province I shall know how to retake it as soon as the waters of the Hoangho are frozen." The war forthwith commenced, but in accordance with sound strategy Topatao withdrew his garrison from southern Honan, and stationed his army on the northern banks of the Hoangho. The ostensible object of the war was therefore obtained without a blow. It only remained for Topatao to put his threat into execution with the advent of winter.

Taoyenchi, Wenti's general, made all the necessary preparations for the defence of the territory which he had so speedily subdued, and the need of fortified places was soon shown by the activity of Topatao's lieutenants. The valiant Gankiai, entrusted with the chief command in the field, sought an early opportunity of adding to his reputation. The occasion soon offered itself, for one of the Song generals ventured to cross the Hoangho, when his detachment was attacked by Gankiai with a superior force and cut to pieces. Gankiai then crossed the Hoangho at an

unguarded spot, and obtained several successes over the Song generals. The effect of these victories was enhanced by a severe defeat inflicted about the same time by Topatao in person on the army of the Prince of Hia. Very few months after the first declaration of war the formidable league against the kingdom of Wei had failed to achieve any permanent success. The victories of the war had been to the credit of Topatao, and Wenti could only console himself by making the most of the hold he had secured over southern Honan, which each day was slipping more completely out of his grasp.

In this emergency Wenti entrusted a fresh army to Tantaotsi, a general who had taken a foremost part* in the deposition of his predecessor. Sent to repair the faults of the other Imperial generals, Tantaotsi was fortunate in finding an early opportunity of accomplishing his task. In the district watered by the Tsiho he fought no fewer than thirty combats with uniform success, and it was only the want of provisions that compelled him reluctantly to order the withdrawal of his troops. The army of Topatao hung constantly on his rear, and all the knowledge of the Imperial general was required to bring his outnumbered force scatheless from the ordeal. The Wei army then again crossed the Hoangho, and reoccupied Honan. Topatao had fulfilled his promise. Honan momentarily lost had been won back, and Wenti's great effort had had no other result than to

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* According to Du Halde.

exhaust his strength and waste his resources. Topatao was relatively the stronger by the overthrow of the military power of both Hia and the Songs; and, having annexed the greater portion of the former kingdom, his victorious army stood ready to meet any opponent and to give law to fresh regions. The reputation of this great success went abroad among the nations, and embassies came from distant parts of Asia to express to Topatao the foreign opinion of his achievement. There was at this time a prevailing impression that in the kingdom of Wei the ancient glories of China were about to revive.

At the court of Wenti the gloom was in proportion to the gravity of the situation. A war, in which many thousands of lives and an infinity of treasure had been expended, had closed without any result being attained. The enterprise had been commenced for the acquisition of a definite object, and the people looked forward to the rewards of victory with a full appreciation of their value. By as much as Wenti's policy had been granted popular support and approval on the assumption that it would prove successful, by not less was it condemned, and repudiated when it was seen to have resulted in hopeless failure. The national rejoicings had been turned into lamentations, and in place of garlands on the temples, the cypress and the myrtle decked the tombs in memory of those who had fallen beyond the Hoangho. Wenti assuredly felt the full bitterness of his experience, for to him more than to either his generals or his subjects it meant anxiety and danger. In several quarters of his

dominions pretenders to his throne put themselves forward, and the significance of their act was increased by the circumstance that they all claimed to represent the family of the Tsins. And as if the dangers and anxieties of his position were not sufficient, Wenti by his own rash and ill-judged act aggravated them by executing Tantaotsi, the only man who had shown any skill or met with any success in the war with Topatao of Wei!

The martial instincts of the two peoples having been indulged, and no immediate inducement remaining to either to again tempt the fortune of war, both Wenti and Topatao devoted themselves, we are told, to the interests of science. The study of history was encouraged in the dominions of Wenti—of that history which was the most expressive commentary on his acts and their crushing condemnation. He also ordained that no magistrate should remain in the same office for a longer period than six years, a measure calculated to secure popular support and to advance the interests of the people. Topatao was in no way behind Wenti in his endeavours to benefit his people, but he varied the monotony of domestic legislation by the exciting persecution of the Buddhists within his dominions. These had made many converts, and were permeating with their theories every class of society. Against them Topatao resolved to employ all the weapons in his power, and to exterminate them root and branch. It was not difficult to give an aspect of treasonable practices to the ceremonies and observances of these Buddhists and their bonzes,

who were in some respects violating the first principles of Chinese life, and Topatao availed himself of the justification thus afforded to adopt the most stringent measures against these enemies, as they were considered, of public morality. The commands of the prince were carried into execution. At a blow their temples crumbled to the dust, their holy books were given to the flames, and those who were unable to escape fell by the edge of the sword. In Wei, at least, the errors which had alone brought ruin to the proud dynasty of the Hans* would not be tolerated—so ran the edict of Topatao.

The peace between Topatao and the Emperor did not prove of long duration. In A.D. 450 the former crossed the frontier at the head of one hundred thousand men with the intention of finally humbling the power of the Emperor, and he was the more encouraged to make the attempt, because he had recently obtained several successes over the nomadic tribes on his northern frontier. He was destined to disappointment, however, for his good fortune deserted him from the very commencement of this war. Being detained with his whole army for several months before a place of little importance, Topatao saw his own reputation for rapid success wane at the same moment that time was afforded the generals of Wenti to collect their forces. He was glad at length to withdraw his army; baffled indeed in his main object, but still without having suffered any serious discom-

* Topatao's own words.—Mailla, vol. iii. p. 57.

fiture. The Emperor encouraged by this sudden change in the complexion of his contest with Topatao resolved to follow his success up by striking a blow in his turn. His army was ordered accordingly to march in pursuit of the retiring troops of Topatao, and a fresh campaign ensued within the dominions of the Prince of Wei. A sanguinary engagement was fought outside the walls of the town of Chenching, in which, at the close of a doubtful day, the advantage remained on the side of the Imperialists, principally because the Wei general had fallen early in the battle. In a second battle fought with a similar result, both sides suffered so heavily that for some time the armies stood face to face in enforced inactivity. Under the influence of this shock both sides endeavoured to come to terms, and the arrangements for the conclusion of peace had been almost concluded when the war broke out afresh, in a final effort to obtain a decisive result for one party or the other.

The only incident in this second campaign that has been preserved for us is the siege of Hiuy, defended by the valiant Tsangchi. Tsangchi defied Topatao to do his worst, and spurned the offers made to him to propitiate that conqueror by a graceful surrender. Tsangchi foiled all the attempts of Topatao to take the fort, and met each device of his opponent with some fresh counter-device of his own. Batteries and mines were freely employed in this celebrated siege, and when Topatao gave it up in despair he had lost twenty thousand of his best men by the sword, and a still greater number by disease. The disgrace was

the more keenly felt in that he had publicly sworn to burn Tsangchi, and his retreat was an acknowledgment, patent to all, of his inability to execute his threat. Neither his reputation nor his power was benefited by the senseless and cruel outrages which he committed on the defenceless towns and inhabitants along his line of retreat. The following year Topatao was murdered by some dissatisfied courtiers, and the state of Wei was for several years entirely occupied with its own internal troubles, and forgot to prosecute those foreign enterprises which had once been its principal object.

Wenti's own life was also drawing to a close. His son Lieouchao had formed a party hostile to his father at court, and in A.D. 453 he attacked Wenti in his palace, and slew him with his own hand according to some, or, according to all the rest, caused him to be slain before his eyes. The parricide did not long benefit by this deed of blood. Defeated on the field of battle by his brother Lieousiun, he was unable to make good his escape. Lieousiun caused him to be executed with his family, and ascended the throne as the Emperor Vouti. Wenti was only thirty-five years of age when he was murdered, during twenty of which he had been the ostensible ruler of China.

After the termination of the troubles caused by the violence of Lieouchao the Empire was at peace, and the government of Wei, occupied with its own affairs, showed no disposition to interfere with its neighbour. Among the men who had been most instrumental in putting Vouti on the throne, was Lieoutan, a member

of the Song family, and for several years there were cordial relations between the two, but at last Vouti saw in this young prince, whose great qualities had endeared him to the people, a possible rival, and one who had grown too powerful to be an obedient subject. He, therefore, dismissed him from the court appointing him to a distant governorship; but Lieoutan was not the man to tamely submit to the slight offered him. He attempted to form a party in the state hostile to the Emperor, and might have succeeded had he been allowed time to complete his arrangements. An army of observation had been sent after him, and at the first sign of an intention to revolt he was attacked and overwhelmed. The defeat and death of Lieoutan made Vouti's last years ones of assured peace. Being an excellent horseman and archer, he gave himself up to the indulgence of his taste for the chase, neglecting, it is to be feared, the important duties of his elevated position. He was also given to excessive eating and drinking, which brought on an attack of apoplexy. He died, after a reign of eleven years, at the early age of thirty-five, leaving to his descendants the troubles of which his own conduct had sown the seeds.

Lieoutsenie, known in history as the Emperor Fiti,* succeeded his father at the age of sixteen. Although he reigned less than one year he gave abundant cause for his brief reign to be remembered in Chinese annals. He began by a wholesale massacre of innocent persons,

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* Fiti means, "the deposed Emperor."

and throughout his life a minister had only to fall under his suspicious glance to be committed to death. By so reckless and untamed a savage no people in the world, and least of all the Chinese, would long submit to be governed. The enumeration of the atrocities he committed would cause a thrill of horror, but they met with their just requital before his career of infamy can be considered to have more than fairly commenced. He was murdered by one of the eunuchs of the palace, and his uncle Mingti was appointed ruler in his stead.

Mingti was scarcely less of a barbarian than Fiti. One of his first acts was to murder fourteen* of the sons of his brother Vouti, because he feared they might prove formidable rivals to his own branch of the family. But as he had no sons he adopted a child and put it forward as the heir apparent. In China, where the right of adoption has never been recognised as in India, these supposititious princes have always been regarded with secret disfavour, and the public mind has ever been prone to expect no good from them. In order to give solidity to his scheme of leaving the crown to this boy, Mingti followed up the murder of his nephews by the execution of his brothers, and it is recorded that the inclination to crime left him only with life. He died in the year A.D. 472, and his loss was not lamented by the people.

His adopted son Lieouyu then became Emperor, under the name of Gou Wang, or Fiti the Second.

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* Mailla gives fourteen, Du Halde thirteen.

He was not less wicked than either of his immediate predecessors, and his tender age placed no restraint upon his criminal propensities. After four years he was murdered by order of Siaotaoching, a general of ability and reputation, and the founder of the next dynasty. Although requested to take the throne Siaotaoching, whose plans were not ripe, ostentatiously refused, thus declaring the purity of his motives and his disinterestedness.

Lieou Chun, or Chunti, a third adopted son of Mingti, was placed on the throne by Siaotaoching, but in two years he was deposed. After his abdication* Siaotaoching became the Emperor Kaoti, of the Tsi dynasty, but apprehensive of danger from Chunti in the future he completed his crimes by adding the murder of this child to that of the boy Fiti.

The history of the Tsi dynasty affords neither a more glorious nor a more interesting subject than that of the Songs. During the four years that Kaoti held possession of the throne not much progress was made towards that regeneration of the Empire, which had been put so prominently forward in the programme of each military adventurer and aspiring ruler. It is said of Kaoti that he was more favourably known after his accession for the support he

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* What was thought of Siaotaoching by his contemporaries may be seen from the following speech: "Which of you," said Wang-kingtse, addressing the magnates of the Court, "can compare with Siaotaoching, both in merit and for services rendered? If anyone has the hardiness to think of anyone save of him, let him count on feeling the weight of my arm and the keenness of my sabre. He is the only man who can give peace to the Empire and restore its original lustre."

accorded to science than for his military exploits. Beyond the sentiment that, if he were spared to rule the country for ten years, he would make gold as common as earth, history has preserved no record of his achievements as a domestic legislator or as a patron of the fine arts. In this too it will be seen that the future was scanned by the excellence of the intentions rather than on the basis of accomplished fact. A lingering war ensued with the King of Wei, and the sucessful defence of the towns of Chowyang and Kiuchan left the advantage in the hands of the generals of Kaoti. At the most favourable view this was, however, little more than a drawn contest. The Wei troops were foiled in their attempt, but Kaoti dared not follow them into their own territory. The eulogium on the character of Kaoti, who died in A.D. 482, reads exaggerated by the light of what he did, and by the insignificant display made by his successors.

His son Siaotse became the Emperor Vouti, the second ruler of the Tsi family. At this time the boast was made that China had the good fortune to be divided among princes who thought only of the welfare of their subjects. The native panegyrist must have referred to a very brief period, although there is no doubt that the division of the Empire had been followed by less serious consequences than might have been supposed. The war with Wei broke out again during this reign, and continued to rage at fitful intervals; but on the whole the Tsis did not get the worst of the struggle. That it was not through their

merit may be perceived from the fact that under this prince, the most respectable of the Tsis, it was publicly proclaimed that they had attained supreme power "not by merit, but by force," and that a dynasty based on that principle could not long maintain the position it had wrongfully acquired. One of the most notable acts of Vouti's reign was to prohibit marriage between families of the same name. This was the revival of an ancient law to that effect, framed no doubt at a time when the intermarriage of blood-relations had been attended with pernicious consequences. It is probable that a similar evil had arisen in this age through the falling-off in the population of the districts which preserved the closest resemblance to the old system.

Vouti died in A.D. 493, and his infant grandson Siaochao succeeded him for a short time. In the following year he was murdered by Siaolun, brother of Kaoti, the founder of the dynasty, and having paved the way to power by further atrocities Siaolun threw aside all hesitation, and ascended the throne under the name of Mingti. On the throne Mingti showed no transcendent ability, and, although his reign witnessed another abortive attempt on the part of the Wei ruler to extend his kingdom, the Tsis could not compare for power or for the enlightenment of their policy with their northern neighbours. About this time the Weis changed their capital from Ping-ching to Loyang, and their family name from Topa*

* Topa means in Tartar, "Lord of the Earth," and Yen signifies "Yellow."

to Yen, of whom more will be heard at a later period. Mingti's last years witnessed a revival of the cruel acts by which he had won his way to power, so that when he died, in A.D. 498, it was felt that there was more cause for rejoicing than for grief. His assassination of the general Siaoy, who had done most for the defence of the state against its northern assailants, was the culminating act of his career, and brought about eventually the fall and extirpation of his race.

Of the two last rulers of the Tsis little need be said. Paokwen, Mingti's son, ruled under that name, or as Hwen Hu, for two years, and on his deposition and murder his brother Siaopaoyong enjoyed the titular rank of Emperor as Hoti for a few months. Neither possessed any real power, and, as both were mere youths, they could offer only a faint opposition to the astute general, who was urged on to effect their ruin partly by a desire for revenge and partly by the promptings of an insatiable ambition. This general's name was Siaoyen, and his one passion was to exact the most ample vengeance from the ruling family for the wrong done him by the barbarous murder of his brother Siaoy. The success of his operations, the crowds of soldiers who flocked to his banner, the general support accorded him by the people, all encouraged him to proceed to the bitter end with the enterprise he had begun. In the face of this semi-popular movement loyalty to the Tsis became a crime, and the punishment for fifty years of misgovernment and tyranny descended with irresistible force on the persons of two youths, who had

hardly assumed the responsibility of government before they found that they and their race were condemned beyond the prospect of reprieve.

The dynasty which had, as we were significantly reminded, established itself by force and not by merit reached the close of its brief career in the murder of Hoti in the year A.D. 502. They sent that unfortunate prince, whose life had been spared, a quantity of gold, and the irony of the present brought his altered circumstances home to him. "What need have I of gold after my death?" said he, "a few glasses of wine would be more valuable." So they brought him what he asked, bottles of the strong wine of the country, and he drank himself into a stupor, when he was strangled with the silken cord of his robe—an end not inappropriate for the last of a race which had shut its eyes to the necessities of the people, and which had always sought the shortest road to unscrupulous and uncontrolled authority.

CHAPTER XII.

THREE SMALL DYNASTIES.

The Leang, the Chin, and the Soui.

Leang.—Vouti.—Abolition of Capital Punishment.—A *Laudator Temporis Acti.*—Wei.—Disintegrating Causes.—Wars.—Chouyang.—Mongchi.—Her Heroic Conduct.—Ginching's Victory.—Imperialists Beleaguered.—A Challenge.—Chongli.—Besieged.—Weijoui.—His Skill.—Realises Position.—Fatal Weakness.—Victory.—Tremendous Losses.—A Religious Emperor.—Size of Dominions.—Superstition.—State of Wei.—Houchi.—A Woman Ruler.—Another Heroine.—Lieouchi.—Troubles in Wei.—An Incident.—Erchu Jong.—Fate of Houchi.—A Cleansing of the State.—Erchu Jong's Schemes.—Career Cut Short.—Murdered.—Division of Wei.—Vouti's Dream.—Imperial Disasters.—Heou King.—Vouti's Misfortunes, and Death.—The Later Leangs.—Destruction of a Library.—Chinpasien.—Founder of the Chins.—Brief Tenure of Power by this Dynasty.—A Fancy Gardener.—Yang Kien.—Founder of the Souis.—The Toukinei.—Wenti.—Reunion of the Country.—Reassertion of China's Supremacy.—Corea.—Acts of New Emperor.—National Education.—Death of Wenti.—Suspicions.—Yangti.—His Capacity.—Great Works.—Canals.—A Palace.—Granaries.—His Tour.—Foreign Wars.—Corea.—Maps.—The Kuen Lun.—The Title of Doctor.—His Excesses.—Kongti.—Liyuen, Prince of Tang.—Deposition of Kongti.—A Reflection.—What the Souis Accomplished.

SIAOYEN was a cadet of the reigning family of Tsi, but, aspiring to mark out a distinct track for himself in

history, he took the dynastic name of Leang, of which he was the founder, and the personal style of Vouti. He experienced no great difficulty in overcoming the opposition of several disappointed rivals, and his wise moderation disarmed the enmity of many who stood on the verge of pronounced hostility. Vouti then devoted most of his attention to the administration of public affairs rather than to the possibility of extending his authority over the neighbouring states. His action was not, perhaps, marked by as much prudence and knowledge of the world as might have been expected from one who had risen to a lofty eminence by his own talents. His abolition of capital punishment was attended, as may well be believed, by a great increase in the amount of crime, and Vouti was soon obliged to suspend his well-meant but very injudicious experiment. This measure and other acts tending in a similar direction were probably originated with the view of making his person popular, and although condemned by the Tribunal of History they may have had the desired effect. Unsatisfactory and inglorious as the rule of the Tsis had been there were still those who remembered the fallen House with regret. One minister sooner than eat the bread of the new Emperor starved himself to death, whereupon Vouti, with the stoicism of the philosopher concealing the chagrin of the new-comer, remarked, "Is it not from Heaven, and not from court notables, that I have received the crown? What reason then induced this miserable personage

to commit suicide?" Loyalty to an old race or an expiring cause is in most cases unintelligible to the reformer who imports and represents the ideas of the new era.

The main interest of this period continues to centre in the fortunes of the Wei rulers. This great northern state was immeasurably superior to that which held together round the Imperial authority at Kienkang,* and even when broken up into two divisions, each of the fragments was more vigorous than the united realm of the Leang ruler. Yet at the time when the Leangs were first established on the throne the causes which brought ruin to the Tartar family of the Topas or Yens were already in operation. It was not, however, until after the close of Vouti's first war that they revealed themselves in even a partial degree. Externally, and practically throughout Vouti's long reign, the ruler of Wei was the arbiter of China's destiny. It was to his court that foreign embassies went, and he regulated the relations with the Tartar and other tribes from Corea to Tibet.

In A.D. 503 the first collision in the long wars, which extended over nearly half a century, occurred between the troops of Wei and those of the new Emperor. In this, as in most cases afterwards, the successes were obtained by the former, although on one occasion the governor of one of Vouti's cities had the courage to leave the gates of his fort open in order to restore confidence by showing how little he feared the foe. But this was the sole exception to the otherwise unchequered

* Nankin.

good fortune of the great Northern Power. The campaign of the following year was chiefly remarkable for the brave defence of a strong place by the wife of its commandant. Chouyang had been entrusted to the charge of Ginching, one of the most skilful lieutenants of the Wei ruler; but during the temporary absence of that officer with a portion of the garrison Vouti's generals, learning that Chouyang was denuded of many of its defenders, seized the favourable opportunity and appeared before the walls at the head of a large army. So rapid were their movements that they succeeded in carrying all the outer defences without a blow. At this stage, when the place was almost in their grasp, Mongchi, the wife of Ginching, appeared upon the ramparts and restored the sinking courage of the garrison. The progress of the Wei troops was checked, and Mongchi made all the necessary preparations for undergoing a siege in form. The inhabitants were armed and the defences of the gate strengthened, and by promise of reward as well as by the inspiration of her presence, Mongchi imbued every man in the garrison with her own resolute spirit. Her fortitude was duly rewarded by the sight of the withdrawal of the baffled army under the Imperial generals. Her husband Ginching had in the meanwhile won a great victory in the field, but had been compelled to abandon the siege of Chongli in consequence of the flooding of his camp by the overflow of the river Hoaiho. Elsewhere too the Wei generals were equally successful, and the campaign closed for the year with unrelieved disaster for the arms of Vouti.

During the ensuing winter internal troubles threatened a disruption of the Wei state, and it appeared doubly necessary for its prince to maintain his reputation by a successful foreign war. In the spring his troops resumed hostilities with the Imperialists, and in the numerous encounters which took place more than fifty thousand men were computed to be slain on the side of the latter. Vouti's generals lost all heart and feared to come out of their positions. Their opponents composed in doggrel rhyme* a challenge, taunting them with being afraid to cross swords with them; but neither the sneers of the foe nor the desperate nature of their position could induce them to issue from their entrenchments and assume the offensive. The Imperialists were full glad to make their escape during the night by availing themselves of a heavy fall of rain.

In A.D. 507 the struggle was renewed with increased fury. Vouti put an army of two hundred thousand men in the field, and entrusted the command to Weijoui, the only one of his generals with any name for success. Yuenyng, the Wei general, began operations by laying close siege to Chongli, which two years before had thwarted the efforts of Ginching. Chongli was a strong place, well-fortified according to the ideas of those days, and protected on two sides by

* This challenge was: "They took the head of a dead person and decked it out in a widow's cap, and carried it round the camp chanting the following ditty: 'Neither the young Siao (Siaohong, the Imperial general) nor the old Liu (Liu Singchin, a minister) is to be feared; no other was formidable, save the tiger of Hofei (Weijoui, the only successful Imperial general).'"—Mailla, vol. v. p. 225.

the Hoaiho. When Yuenyng sat down before it with an army of three hundred thousand men it was not considered probable that it could stand a long siege, and in order to precipitate its fall Yuenyng sent a portion of his army across the Hoaiho and surrounded it on all sides. The garrison held out bravely, and foiled the desperate attempts made to storm the place; and meanwhile Weijoui was approaching with rapid strides. Yuenyng began to entertain doubts of the result, but he trusted to the bridges he had thrown across the Hoaiho to enable him to come to the assistance of the corps south of the river, should Weijoui attempt to overwhelm it. So he still clung to his lines when the relieving force was announced to be close at hand.

Weijoui had taken in the situation at a glance. He saw the fatal weakness in the long line of circumvallation of his over-confident opponent, and that it was only necessary to destroy the bridges to entail the practical destruction of his force. He accordingly collected vessels, which he filled with combustibles, and sent them during the night up the river with the tide against the bridges upon which the safety of Yuenyng's army depended. The result answered his most sanguine expectations. The morning found the Wei army divided into two portions without any means of communication between them, and the southern division in the power of the overwhelmingly superior army of Weijoui. The Imperial army assaulted the lines with the greatest eagerness, and the whole of the southern division of the Wei army was either put to

the sword or drowned in the waters of the Hoaiho. Weijoui and his lieutenant, Tsaokingsong, followed up this brilliant feat by attacking the portion north of the river, and after a stubbornly contested battle, succeeded in driving it from the field. More than two hundred thousand men perished, and their standards and baggage became the spoil of the conqueror. This brilliant victory compensated for several years of disastrous warfare, and checked the successful career of the ambitious Prince of Wei. The credit for this triumph was due exclusively to Weijoui, who showed great skill and a profound knowledge of the art of war. Had Vouti followed his advice in other matters the character of his reign might have been raised, and he might have given solidity to his rule.

Although implored by his general to follow up this advantage, Vouti determined to refrain from further action and to rest upon his laurels. In order to obtain time for his religious devotions Vouti refused to avail himself of the golden opportunity for advancing his own interests. Having shattered the military power of his chief adversary, he called off his troops and permitted him to recover from a shock which, had it been followed up, would have been attended with fatal consequences. Several years of peace ensued after the battle of Chongli, and during these Vouti devoted some attention to the education and internal government of his subjects. At this period a statement showing the number of towns over which he ruled was published, and according to this there were twenty-three towns of the first rank, three hun-

dred and fifty of the second, and one thousand and twenty-two of the third within his dominions.*

At this time it is stated that Vouti distributed rewards among his generals, who had gained fresh laurels in a war with a rebel force, and endeavoured to promote the welfare of his people by studying their wants and by mitigating the code of punishment in use. This may be considered the brightest period in Vouti's long reign, the time when he had not yet become the slave of a superstition which was as violent in its expression and as ineradicable in its nature as that of Philip of Spain.†

Meanwhile the internal affairs of the Wei kingdom had not been as tranquil or as prosperous as they had wont to be. Yuenkio had been succeeded in A.D. 515 by his son Yuenhiu as king of Wei; but the reality of

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* There does not appear to have been a census taken on this occasion.

† An extreme instance is given of his superstition in Mailla, vol. v. pp. 279-80. Like Charles V., Vouti retired to a monastery of Buddhists, and bound himself to abide by their practices. When the magnates of the Court came to request him to return to his duties, the priests refused to permit his departure until a large sum of money was paid in the form of a fine. It was proposed to destroy the temple and put its inmates to the sword; but Vouti peremptorily forbade it and ordered the payment of the money. Two years after this episode, in A.D. 529, Vouti again went into seclusion for the purpose of acquiring an intimate acquaintance, he said, with the doctrines of Buddha. He shaved off his hair and beard and remained several days in a cell, and the earnest entreaties of his ministers barely availed to recall him to a sense of the weakness and imprudence of his conduct. He again had to pay a heavy fine to escape from the incarceration which he had voluntarily imposed upon himself. In his earlier days Vouti had been an orthodox believer in the moral ethics of Confucius and in the divine supremacy of the great God (Changti); it was only towards the close of his life that he took up with the heresy of Buddhism, or the worship of Fo.

power was held by his wife Houchi, an ambitious woman of considerable capacity. In a short time she went the length of absolutely setting her husband aside and of ruling herself in the name of an infant son. Houchi was an ardent devotee of Buddhism,* and the new sect under her protection speedily regained the ground it had lost during the persecution of Topasse. One of her first acts was to declare war upon Vouti, but the result did not answer her expectations. Her principal army was defeated, and had it not been for the brave defence of Tsetong by Lieouchi, the wife of the commandant, the war would have been marked by nothing but disaster. When the Imperialists appeared before the place Lieouchi put herself at the head of her troops and made all the preparations for defending it to the last extremity. After the siege had continued for some days she discovered that one of her lieutenants was playing the traitor. She invited him to a general council of her officers, when she accused him of treason. On his admitting the justice of the charge she severed his head from his body with a blow of her own sword. After this no one in the garrison of Tsetong entertained treasonable correspondence with the besiegers. Lieouchi showed not less judgment than courage in all her measures. Her garrison depended for water on a single well, which the enemy succeeded in cutting off. Lieouchi

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* On one occasion she ordered a minister who had spoken irreverently of the Buddhist priests to pay them a fine of a tael of gold. It was only his tact and skilful reply that saved his head.—Mailla, vol. v. p. 241.

at once took steps to supply the want by collecting rain water in vases, and by means of linen and the clothes of the soldiers, and these fortunately proved sufficient, as it was then the rainy season. Lieouchi* thus baffled all the efforts of Vouti's general; but Houchi had on the whole no reason to feel gratified with the result of her first war.

Houchi did not remain long in power after the conclusion of this war. She was deposed and placed in confinement, and Yueny, one of the Wei princes, became Regent. Another turn in the progress of events brought Houchi back to power, and the same wave of party intrigue, turning to its own advantage a phase in popular feeling, carried the dictator Yueny to the block. During these troubles, which were aggravated by a lingering war on the northern frontier with the Getæ and other Tartar tribes, the power of the Wei kingdom greatly declined, and Vouti seized what seemed a favourable opportunity for recovering some of the places which he had lost. The war, once it broke out, went on with fluctuating fortune for several years, but on the whole Vouti must be allowed to have enjoyed the greater success.† Several towns

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* This might be called the brightest period for women in Chinese history. Three heroines in three different ways, Mongchi, Houchi and Lieouchi, figure prominently in the record of these few years, a circumstance without parallel in the history of the country.

† A deed of heroism performed by Housiaohou, a Wei general, and in its main feature reminding us of the incident of D'Assis, deserves a niche in this history. Housiaohou had him sent with a fresh army to the succour of a beleaguered comrade. He failed, however, and was taken prisoner. Vouti's commander thought that it would be a favourable opportunity to show his remaining opponent how hopeless it would be to continue the struggle, and

which he desired to possess surrendered to him, and at the close of the campaign he showed himself more anxious for its renewal than his opponent.

Meanwhile, the internal troubles of Wei were accumulating fresh force. Houchi's power was fast waning, but it did not appear so clear what was to supplant it. There were popular risings, and intriguing generals figuring in the foreground of rival parties. But the popular risings failed, and it long remained doubtful which of the generals would succeed in establishing his supremacy over the rest. The very disunion in the realm and the confusion caused by rival claimants gave a temporary stability to Houchi's position, and had she turned the situation to more skilful account she might have foiled her opponents and compelled them to recognise her as a promoter of, and not an obstacle to, the reforms necessary for the preservation of the state. In these straits the only sure prospect of restoring order lay in the abilities of Erchu Jong, the commander-in-chief of the troops in six provinces, and the necessity for immediate action was brought home to his mind by Houchi's final act, which was to depose her son. Erchu Jong then marched on the capital, which he seized. Houchi became his prisoner, and

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accordingly sent Housiaohou under guard to the outworks to communicate the news of his own defeat. When within hearing he shouted to his countrymen: "I was on the point of arriving for your relief when I allowed myself to be taken by the enemy, more numerous and better supplied than my army. Do not lose courage; defend yourselves like brave men, and I assure you that succour will very soon arrive." He was prevented saying any more by his escort cutting him to pieces.

ended her life and her crimes by being drowned in the waters of the Hoangho.

Erchu Jong appears to have been naturally a man of stern and unrelenting character. For the confusion in the realm he wished to exact a punishment adequate to the crimes of those who had produced it, and having sentenced Houchi, he proceeded to inflict punishment on her abettors. He assembled two thousand of the notables in a group outside the city, and having reproached them with their crime in neglecting the welfare of the state, he ordered his cavalry to slaughter them. He carried the same prompt severity into his action against some insurgents who ventured to question his authority, but on the remonstrance of his friends, who pointed out that, the heads being slain, it would be unwise to exasperate the mass of the people, he exhibited a clemency which was perhaps foreign to his nature. It would be tedious to describe in detail the petty wars and quarrels which ensued. Vouti thought the fall of Houchi afforded him a favourable opportunity for resuming the war with Wei, and even went so far as to set up a rival prince to the nominee of Erchu Jong. His general, Chingkingchi, obtained several successes, and made it a boast that he was victorious in forty-seven combats. But when Erchu Jong took the field in person Chingkingchi's fortune vanished and he was compelled to beat a hasty retreat. All the towns that had surrendered were abandoned, and the results of the campaign completely lost. It was at this moment that Erchu Jong formed the ambitious

scheme of reuniting the Empire. "Wait a little while," he said to his most trusted colleague, "and we shall assemble all the braves from out our western borders. We will then go and bring to reason the six departments of the north, and the following year we will cross the great Kiang and place in chains Siaoyen, who calls himself Emperor." Such was the intention of Erchu Jong, the great hunter, and the best general within the bounds of China. There is no doubt that he would have carried out this ambitious and noble scheme had his life been spared; but it was not to be. Erchu Jong had become too powerful a subject not to have bitter enemies at court, and these intrigued so successfully against him that they obtained the prince's sanction to his murder. Invited to the palace on a pretext, Erchu Jong was slain in the Hall of Audience. Thus passed away the man who had done more than any other of the age towards advancing the best interests of the country which were represented by the one word, union.

The death of Erchu Jong was the signal for fresh strife in the dominions of the Wei ruler, and before it closed the proud kingdom founded by the Tartar family of the Topas was split up into two parts, each inveterately hostile to the other. At the head of one of these stood Kao Hwan, an ambitious and successful general, of whom it may be said that he desired, with less capacity, to emulate the deeds of Erchu Jong.

It was soon after these great changes in Wei that Vouti dreamt a dream which he was weak enough to accept as possessing a practical meaning. There ap-

peared to him a vision of persons offering him the long-coveted province of Honan, and he at once ordered his troops to march into it for the purpose of taking what he believed a supernatural power decreed should be his. The result falsified the anticipations of his credulity. His army was defeated in the field and driven back in confusion across the frontier. With the collapse of his military preparations the edifice of his schemes of extension of dominion fell to the ground. Frequent disaster left little or nothing of the Imperial dignity, and all his contemporaries saw in it was the spectacle of an aged prince, broken in power as in health, hastening to the fall which was inevitable.

The final blow was struck by Heou King, one of Vouti's vassals, who had shaken off the authority of his suzerain. In A.D. 549 he published an indictment of the ruler and appeared before the walls of the capital. The slight resistance offered by Vouti's body-guard was soon overcome, and the monarch was helpless in the hands of a turbulent soldiery and their leader. Borne down by the weight of more than eighty years, Vouti deplored his present weakness and the errors which had brought it to pass. "It was I who raised my family and it is I who have destroyed it. I have no reason to complain," was his truthful comment on the ruin with which he saw that he and his were threatened. He did not long survive the closing catastrophe of his reign. During forty-seven years he had governed his portion of China with justice and a fair show of success; but the surrender of his capital and person to a successful soldier was

the death-knell of all his hopes. The chagrin told on the shattered constitution of the octogenarian,* and in a few days he found relief for all his troubles in "the eternal sleep." The Chinese historians descant on what Vouti might have been, but it seems to us that in this they leave themselves open to the charge of ingratitude. As the ruler of that part of China which they have identified with the Empire, Vouti appears to have been the greatest and most praiseworthy prince in those years of trouble and littleness, which intervened between the disappearance of the Hans and the advent of the great Tang dynasty.

Vouti was more correct than perhaps he expected to be when he said that he had destroyed his family. His third son, Wenti, succeeded him, but he was only a cypher in the hands of Heou King. After a short reign of less than three years Wenti was murdered by his minister, who was in turn attacked by his victim's brother Siaoy. Siaoy, assisted by Chinpasien, a semi-independent chief, drove Heou King from power, and on his being taken prisoner this dethroner of kings was executed and his body exposed in the streets of Kien-kang.† Siaoy was placed on the throne as the Emperor Yuenti, but he was not more fortunate than his predecessors. After three years Chinpasien revolted, besieged his ruler in the capital, and bore down all opposition. Seeing further resistance to be

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* Du Halde, vol. i. p. 386, says that his death was caused by those in charge of him refusing to give him some honey which he asked for to relieve a pain in his throat.

† Nankin.

hopeless, Yuenti surrendered to his enemy. Before doing so he broke his sword and burnt a library containing a hundred and forty thousand volumes, exclaiming, "All is over! All my skill in war and letters henceforth becomes useless to me." His intuition proved right. His surrender was the signal for his death, and his capital was given over to the victorious soldiery to plunder.

The last of the Leangs was Kingti, Yuenti's ninth son. He reigned only two years when he also was murdered by Chinpasien, Prince of Chin, who became Emperor, and the founder of the next dynasty. The Leangs held possession of the throne for in all fifty-six years, during forty-seven of which Vouti had been ruler. The same year which witnessed the fall of the Leangs also saw the extinction, without a blow, of the Topa family, which had produced the great princes Topasse and Topatao, and which had ruled over Wei during one hundred and fifty years.

Chinpasien* gave his dynasty the name of Chin, from that of his principality, and took the usual name of Vouti. Chin Vouti did not long enjoy possession of the throne which he had won. He consolidated his success by suppressing several petty insurrections, and by according terms to one of their principal leaders. His lieutenant Chowti restored order for his master in some of the most disturbed districts, and the Chin dynasty appeared to have every

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* Chinpasien claimed descent from Chinche, a general of the Hans.

prospect of an assured and tranquil existence, when the sudden death of Chinpasien, after a reign of less than three years, threw things again into confusion. Having no children, he had named Wenti, one of his nephews, his successor. This prince reigned eight years, but his life proved singularly uneventful. Several attempts were made to revive the Leangs, and Chowti, Chinpasien's former lieutenant, rebelled against his prince. But all these rebels were defeated, and Chowti's previous services could not save him from the punishment due to one who had broken his oath to his lawful ruler. Wenti* was an amiable prince, and, without performing any particularly brilliant act, he gained the affections of his subjects. When he died, in A.D. 567, his son, Petsong, or Ling Hai Wang, became Emperor, but only reigned two years. Petsong was deposed by his uncle.

Suenti, a nephew of Chinpasien, was the next ruler of the Chins. During his reign of fourteen years the northern kingdom of Chow, which had been formed after the fall of the Topa family in Wei, was gradually extending its dominion over the whole of the country north of the Yangtsekiang. The king of that state had found no difficulty in annexing the neighbouring kingdom of Tsi, the ruler of which was more given to the pleasures of the chase and the banquet than to the cares of government. He had great taste, we are informed, in the laying-out of

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* One of Wenti's decrees was to order that the hours of the night should be sounded in the palace by the beating of a drum, a practice still observed.—Du Halde, vol. i. p. 388.

ornamental gardens, but the preservation of his life and of his people's independence was a matter in which he showed less proficiency. When the Chow ruler died his work was carried on by his son's minister, Yang Kien, Prince of Soui, whose reputation soon overshadowed that of the princes on the throne and spread throughout China. Before Suenti's death it was seen that Yang Kien was "the coming man," and Suenti adopted no measures for averting the peril which threatened his family. His devotion to the fine arts and his skill as a musician were most commendable in their way, but the times were such as required sterner qualities for the preservation of existence, both by individuals and by states.

His son, Heouchu, or Chang Ching Kong, succeeded to the throne, but his evil disposition did not take long to reveal itself. He gave himself over to his appetites, and, although nominally sovereign during seven years, it was plain from the first that his power would crumble away at the slightest shock. When his excesses had sufficiently disgusted his subjects, Yang Kien, now become ruler of Northern China, came forward as the deliverer of the oppressed peoples of the south.* His troops crossed the great

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* During the period covered by the Leang and the Chin dynasties a new northern people had appeared on the scene occupied by the Sienpi and Gewgen. These were the Toukinei or Turks, who were ruled by a kohan or khakhan. They were a continual cause of disturbance to the northern states of Wei and Chow, and their relations were the exact counterpart of those between the nomad tribes and the settled government of the country in past ages. In A.D. 586 they recognised the supremacy of Yang Kien and accepted his calendar. Their example was followed by the Tangtingkiang,

Yangtsekiang, entered the capital, and subdued a country which welcomed its conqueror. Heouchu was deposed, and retired into private life, where he survived by twenty-four years the collapse of his own fortune and that of the family of the Chins. Thus terminated, in A.D. 589, the dynasty of the Chins, certainly the least notable of all the families which have ruled in China. In thirty-two years they gave five rulers to the state—none, with the exception of the first, worthy of his position. Undistinguished in themselves, their disappearance from history is remarkable as heralding the reunion of the great Empire, so long divided into independent and hostile states.

Yang Kien assumed the title of Kaotsou Wenti on the consummation of his earthly ambition, and during his reign of fifteen years over a reunited country he gave repeated proof of the possession of great qualities. Under his guidance the power of the Emperor was vested with fresh significance among the neighbouring peoples, and, although not yet restored to the full height it had enjoyed under Tsin Hoangti and Han Vouti, the ancient supremacy of China over all the countries of Eastern Asia may be considered to have been again asserted and established by the founder of the Soui dynasty. His generals on the one hand drove back the Toukinei behind the desert, and on the other

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the barbarians of the West, who were probably the remaining representatives of the Hunnish power, which, checked in the direction of China, had rolled westwards to the heart of the Roman Empire.

engaged in a war with the King of Corea, who, trusting to the difficult mountain range which serves that country as a barrier, thought it safe to defy the Chinese ruler. Kaoyuen, the sovereign of that remote and little-known kingdom, which, although sometimes overrun by hostile armies, and often averting invasion by a timely surrender, has preserved its independence and institutions to the present day, refused to render to Wenti the tribute which that ruler considered to be his due. After a doubtful campaign Kaoyuen found it prudent to abandon the position he had taken up, and to accord the Soui prince the compliment which he demanded.

Two of the most important of Wenti's acts in domestic legislation were the bringing of the southern districts of the kingdom under the same law as those of the north, and the passing of an alteration in the accepted practice in the matter of state education. In the former case his well-meant effort failed, as the people would have nothing to do with the new regulations. Wenti had the good judgment to recognise the unpopularity of his attempted innovation, and to withdraw the obnoxious regulations. With regard to the second matter it had been customary from the time of the Hans to have schools and colleges in all the principal towns established for the gratuitous education of the people. To Wenti, who was an unlettered man, the advantage of this scheme of national education appeared to be no equivalent for the great burden it cast upon the taxpayers; and despite the representations of all the

learned classes, he ordered their abolition in the year A.D. 601. According to some this decree applied to all, with the exception of the Imperial College at the capital; but there is authority for the view that it was to be enforced only in the cases of persons intended for commercial or mechanical pursuits. Regarded in the light in which it has been handed down to us it can only be considered as a retrograde step, but it is quite possible that it was rendered imperative by considerations of finance.

The death of Wenti took place in A.D. 604. There is reason to believe that his end was precipitated by his second son Yankwang, who aspired to be his successor. The suspicion is not weakened by the fact that Yankwang beyond doubt murdered his elder brother, whom Wenti had intended to be his heir. Of Wenti's personal character much might be said in the highest terms of praise, and even the faults with which he has been charged are those that appeal to our sympathy. Brave, and a skilful commander, he possessed the essentials to success in the dark age out of which he emerged like a meteor from a gloomy sky. His moderation gained him friends, and disarmed the hostility of his foes. The magnanimity of a sovereign who spared the life of the prince he had deposed, and who erected temples in honour of neglected dynasties that had immediately preceded his own, was such as appealed to the general understanding. With these great qualifications was combined a practical wisdom that shone conspicuous in all his acts, and it is without surprise that we read the panegyric

written by some Chinese student on the "unlettered" Wenti.

If Yankwang, or Yangti, seized the Empire by means that were brutal and unnatural, he soon showed that he possessed all the qualifications of a ruler of a great people. From the very beginning of his reign he devoted his attention to the construction of great public works which have earned him a name more durable than that of the general who devotes his energy and abilities to the gain of conquests that are destined to prove ephemeral. One of his first acts was to remove the capital to Loyang, which he desired to make the most magnificent city in the world. Two million men were employed upon his palace and other public buildings, and fifty thousand merchants were invited or commanded to come thither from other cities in the Empire. Of all his works the great canals* which he caused to be cut out in all directions were at once

* The most authentic account of these canals is that handed down to us in the "Chouihingkiukien," or History of the Control of Waters, of which the Père Amiot has left the following translation: "Yangti, of the Soui dynasty, who ascended the throne in A.D. 605 and only reigned thirteen years, began in the very first year of his reign to cause either new canals to be constructed or the ancient ones to be extended, so that ships could go from the Hoangho into the Kiang, and from those two great streams into the rivers of Tsi, Wei, Han, &c. A notable, named Siaohwaitsing, presented a memorial to him on the subject of a method for making all rivers navigable throughout their course, and for making them communicate with one another by means of a newly-invented system of canals. His project was accepted and carried into practice to such an extent that more than sixteen hundred leagues of canals were either made, reconstructed, or repaired. This great enterprise required immense labour, which was performed in equal portions by soldiers, workmen, and the inhabitants both of the towns and rural districts. Each family was required to furnish a man of the age of between fifteen and fifty years, to whom the Government paid nothing more than his food.

the most useful, and the most splendid triumphs of man over the obstacles of nature. By his order public granaries, to which during years of plenty the prosperous were compelled to contribute, were erected in all the provincial capitals in preparation for times of dearth. And when these grandiose schemes had been brought to completion, Yangti accompanied by his court, the great officials of the state, and the chosen troops of his army made a kind of Imperial progress through his dominions. Both in his works and in this tour through the realm Yangti may be said to have resembled the Emperor Adrian.

His foreign wars* were not as successful as those of his father had been. For many years he was engaged in a desperate struggle† with the people of Corea and their intrepid prince. The successes of this war were entirely with the latter, who repulsed several invading armies, and in the end

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The soldiers to whom the lot of labour on these works fell had an increase of pay, and the specially hired labourers did not receive any on certain days in the month. Some of these canals were lined with stone. That canal which connected the capital, or rather the Northern Court, with the Southern, was forty yards wide, and on both its banks were planted elms and willows; that which connected the Eastern Court with the Western was less magnificent, and was also bordered on either side by a row of trees. Several of these great works still remain to testify to the greatness of Yangti."

* It was during Yangti's reign that the Chinese first came into contact with the islanders of Loo Chow or Lieou Kieou, a group of islands lying five hundred miles off the coast of Fuhkien, in the direction of Japan. Yangti requested this king to pay him tribute, and on his refusal, sent an expedition against him. Success attended its operations; the king was slain and five thousand prisoners were brought back. Seven hundred years later the claim was renewed by the first of the Mings.

† Mr. Ross describes this war in his "History of Corea," and the facts are fully detailed in Mailla, vol. v. pp. 515–531.

Yangti was fain to admit that the conquest of Corea would cost too much both in time and money to compensate for the attempt. Elsewhere fortune did not smile on Yangti's arms, although the triumph of the Souis brought to China envoys and merchants from the extremes of Asia. Fresh maps and an interesting description of the countries of Asia were obtained during this reign, and the Kuen Lun,* or Mountains of Heaven, are first mentioned at this time. Neither his care for his people nor his devotion to science could save, however, his closing years from trouble and civil disturbance. The vast sums he had laid out on great works, and the extravagance which marked his ordinary expenditure, exhausted his exchequer, leaving him without the source of strength which, of all others, was most essential to the preservation of his position. He showed wisdom of a practical kind in forbidding his subjects to carry offensive weapons, and his successors down to the present day have studiously followed him in the path he marked out in this respect. He reversed much of his father's legislation in educational matters, and was the first to accord the degree of "Doctor" to those officials who had passed a fixed examination.

He tarnished his fame during the last few years of his life by giving himself up to the indulgence of his pleasures, and his indifference to his duties brought upon him the vengeance of a fanatic named Haokie. This man at the head of a party of discontented soldiers

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* Kuen Lun was placed in the middle of the world, a position transferred at a later period to the Pamir.

surprised the Emperor while journeying through his dominions and strangled him before aid could arrive. In this ignominious fashion closed the life and reign of Yangti, who at one time promised to be the most remarkable ruler of his House and period.

His son Kongti was placed on the throne by the assistance of Liyuen and his sons. Liyuen had been made Prince of Tang some years before, and his intrigues and open sedition had been the cause of considerable anxiety during the last years of Yangti's reign. Kongti was placed on the throne only to abdicate. The same year beheld his rise and his fall. The ruin of his fortunes, the collapse of his House, were rendered the more expressive by the destruction of the great and costly palace which Yangti had constructed. Liyuen's second son and acting commander is reported to have said that this splendid edifice was only useful "to soften the heart of a prince, and to foment his cupidity." Accordingly he gave it to the flames. The abdication of Kongti was followed by his murder, when Liyuen assumed the style of Emperor.

Thus passed away the Soui dynasty after a twenty-nine years' tenure of power. It was the last of the five small dynasties which ruled China after the fall of the Hans. Of these it was the greatest, in that it ruled a united China, and left to its inheritor the legacy of a country which it had all the credit of having consolidated and of having restored to something approaching its former height as a great administrative and conquering Empire.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TANG DYNASTY.

Taitsong the Great.

Kaotsou.—His Clemency.—The Chinese Plantagenets.—Wars.—Lichimin.—New Capital.—Destruction of Yangti's Palace.—Reflections.—Successes.—A Triumph.—Jealous Brothers.—Intrigues.—"The Biter Bitten."—Wei Ching.—Retirement of Kaotsou.—Taitsong.—The task he set himself.—The Border Tribes.—Vigorous Policy.—The Turks and Tartars repelled.—Pienkiao truce.—Sayings of Emperor.—Organisation of Army.—Numbers.—Drills and Military Exercises.—Armed Men.—Turks Again.—Gobi.—Foreign Embassies.—His Administration.—Religious Persuasion.—Empress Changsunchi.—Her Ability and Virtue.—Reductions in Imperial Establishment.—College.—Imperial Library.—Death of Empress.—Loss to Taitsong.—Toufan or Tibet.—Its Early History.—Princess Wencheng.—Friendly Relations with its Ruler.—Central Asia.—Chinese Provinces.—Lichitsi.—Assassins.—A Plot.—An Ungrateful Heir.—Corea.—Sinlo.—War with Corea.—Successes.—Army of Invasion.—Kaimow and Bisha.—Sieges.—Leaoutung.—Baiyen.—Defeat of Coreans.—Anshu.—Stubborn Defence of.—Retreat of Taitsong.—Emperor's Magnanimity.—Illness and Death of Emperor.—His Character.—Deserves name of Great.—How he was Mourned.—The Chinese Cæsar.

LIYUEN is known in history as the Emperor Kaotsou, first ruler of a dynasty which restored the country to its legitimate place among the nations. His very first act proclaimed both the clemency of the man, and the self-

confidence of the rising family. China had still to be conquered, the Tangs were only one set of competitors among many, there must have been some who looked back with feelings of attachment and regret to the days of Yangti, yet despite all these elements of danger and disunion Kaotsou's first act was to spare the members of the deposed House and to allot them pensions.* He desired to govern in accordance with the dictates of his conscience, which forbade him to stretch his prerogative or violate the fundamental laws of justice and humanity. The long troubles through which China struggled were at length passing away, and, as they disappeared, they left the ruler strong enough to follow a policy which had as its principal object the welfare of the state, rather than the personal gratification of the ruler. It was the peculiar glory of the Tangs to lead the nation into a new path of greatness, which has proved durable, at the same time that they raised the tone of public life. If the institutions and political power of England first assumed form and took substance in the hands of the Plantagenets, the service rendered to China by the Tangs was neither less tangible nor practical.

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* "When one family has been displaced by another in the governing office," said Kaotsou, "rarely does it happen that all those who, by right of their birth, might flatter themselves that they have a claim to supreme rank, are not massacred. A barbarous policy, which our apprehensions would fain represent as necessary, inspired the founders of new dynasties, and in particular those who are nearest our own time, with this cruel resolution. As for me, far from conforming with a usage which seems justifiable in the eyes of sanguinary men, I desire to found my Empire only on justice and humanity."—"Mem. sur les Chinois," t. v. p. 88.

The nine years during which Kaotsou occupied the throne were passed in wars, both beyond the frontier and within the realm; and, although in all his acts there was conspicuous a kingly capacity seldom surpassed, the fame of Kaotsou has assumed an attenuated form in comparison with that of his greater son. Indeed while he lived it was not very different. The annals of Kaotsou are chiefly of interest because they contain some of the noblest deeds of Lichimin, afterwards the great Taitsong. The wisdom of the father was eclipsed by the splendid qualities of the son, and it has been transmitted to us in only a reflected sense through the great achievements of the latter. Had Kaotsou lived at another period he would have been handed down to posterity as an able ruler whose successors should aspire to emulate him. As it is the Chinese historian records as his most meritorious action the prudence which induced him after a nine years' reign to abdicate in favour of his son.

Kaotsou established his capital at Singan, the ancient Changnan, and his son Lichimin, on capturing Loyang the metropolis of the Souis, caused Yangti's great palace to be destroyed. It was with the moral reflection that, "so much pomp and pride could not long be sustained, and ought to entail the ruin of those who indulged them rather than attend to the wants of the people," Lichimin ordered this magnificent pile to be reduced to ashes, but it would be a mistake to see in this measure only the act of a Vandal. The Souis had fallen, and the Tangs were rising upon the ruin of that family; but some formal expression of the change

was needed. Neither Kaotsou nor Lichimin would wreak their vengeance on the members of the fallen dynasty. The destruction of the building which typified the greatness of the Souis sufficed for all practical purposes, and leaves the reputation of the Tangs free from those moral stains which sully the shield of most Chinese rulers. The capture of Loyang was only one achievement among many. Wherever Lichimin marched victory went before him. His banners flaunted in the breezes of the northern states, and a great Turk confederacy beyond Shansi felt the weight of the military prowess of the young general.* Within four years (A.D. 624) of his assisting in placing his father on the throne, Lichimin was able to announce that he had pacified the realm. Rebels had been vanquished, and foreign foes compelled to sue for peace; while the people rejoiced at having obtained a ruler capable of governing them without resorting to the arbitrary expedients of the despot.

Lichimin did not go without his reward for the brilliant successes he obtained in the field. His return to Singan recalls the description of the triumphs of the conquerors of ancient Rome. Dressed in costly armour, with a breast-plate of gold, Lichimin rode into his father's capital at the head of his victorious troops. Ten thousand picked horsemen formed his personal escort, and thirty thousand cuirassiers fol-

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* His intrepidity was not less striking than his judgment. A regiment of cuirassiers, with black tiger-skins, was attached to his person and specially distinguished itself in these wars.

lowed, in the middle of whom appeared a captive king of the Tartars. The spoils of numerous cities, accompanied by the generals who had failed to defend them, were there to grace the triumph of the conqueror. Just as Marcellus or one of the Scipios filed up the Sacred Way when bringing to the Imperial city the plunder of Gaul or of Carthage, did Lichimin proceed to the Hall of his Ancestors where he apprised the shades of his progenitors of the success which had attended his arms. Having rewarded his principal officers, and accorded their lives to the defeated, Lichimin was feasted in presence of his army by the Emperor, who gave no stinted meed of praise to the son who had rendered such valiant and opportune service both to himself and to the country. The rejoicings of that eventful day, which beheld the popular ratification of the new government, closed with the proclamation of a general amnesty to all, and of a diminution in the taxes; and it still stands out as one of the most remarkable turning points in Chinese history.

Lichimin's brothers envied while they could not emulate his greatness. His elder brother, unable to appreciate the generosity of character which had impelled him to advise his father to proclaim him heir apparent, intrigued against him, resolving in the first place to undermine his position at court, and in the next to take his life. Kaotsou's mind was warped by the wiles of this intrigue against his favourite son, who fell into disgrace, and at one time thought of leaving a court which was as little congenial to his tastes as it was full of danger to his person. The

course of history might have been changed, had Lichimin not discovered the quarter whence these hidden shafts were directed against his person and his reputation. His brothers, afraid of his influence with the people and the army, formed a plot for his murder, but their scheme was divulged. The blow which they had intended for Lichimin was turned upon themselves, and their death left this prince the incontestable heir to the throne. He demonstrated his worthiness for the position by the moderation he evinced towards those who had been the keenest partizans in his brothers' cause; and Wei Ching, the ablest of them all, lived to become in later years the most trusted adviser of the man whose death he had plotted.

The same year* (A.D. 626) which witnessed these intrigues and the proclamation of Lichimin as heir apparent, also beheld the retirement of Kaotsou from public life. It may well have been that it was something more than the alleged reason of weight of years that induced this prince to quit the throne at a time when there seemed to be nothing more for him to do save to enjoy his hard-won triumph, and that the force of public opinion compelled him to resign the charge of the administration to his son. The transfer

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* This year was also marked by an edict against the priests of Buddhism. There were a hundred thousand Bonzes or monks attached to this religion in the country, all sworn to celibacy. Kaotsou ordered them to quit their monasteries and marry. Their colleges and temples were also reduced in number.—Pauthier, p. 285, and Mailla, vol. vi. pp. 31–32. In this edict some evidence may be seen that the population of China was at this period far from being excessive.

of authority was effected in the most regular manner and with the necessary formalities. Kaotsou expressed his sovereign determination to seek the charm and relaxation of private life, and Lichimin refused to accept a charge for which he said his capacity was inadequate. But when these courtly phrases had served their turn, Lichimin felt constrained to obey the paternal command.* Kaotsou descended from the throne, and Lichimin became Emperor under the style of Taitsong. The greater reputation had absorbed the less, and, having long wielded the executive power, Taitsong by the voluntary retirement of his father assumed the position to which his personal qualities gave him every right.

The first acts of the new ruler showed that he would rest satisfied with no partial degree of success in the task he had set himself to accomplish. It was his first and principal object to give the Chinese the benefit of a government which was national in its sympathies and its aims. He had to revive the old sentiment that the Chinese were one people, and that the prosperity of the realm, and the stability of the ruling powers equally depended on the tranquillity and sense of security which should generally prevail. To him also it seemed a matter of the first importance to extend

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* Kaotsou lived nine years after his deposition, long enough to witness the most remarkable of his son's achievements, and the complete consolidation of his dynasty on the throne. On the occasion of one of the most remarkable successes over the western tribes he issued a sort of triumphant address to the nation on the exceptional fortune of his son, who had been allowed a victory denied to many previous rulers. Kaotsou's death occurred in A.D. 635, when he was seventy-one years of age.

the influence of the Chinese among the neighbouring states, for he knew that by so doing he should alone succeed in preserving what had been won. The surrounding tribes from Corea to Kokonor, and from Tibet to Tonquin were the inveterate enemies of the Chinese, and nothing but the vigilance of the frontier authorities, and the strength of the border garrisons could avail to keep them at a respectful distance from the centres of Chinese prosperity. Constantly changing both in name, and perhaps sometimes in race, these nomads were at all times the same relatively to the Chinese. What in the history of this island the Picts and Scots were to the Romans, or the Welsh to the Normans of the first Plantagenets, that were the Huns, and the other Turk and Tartar clans to the Celestials. Taitsong fully grasped this fact, and, during the whole of his reign, he was engaged in a never-ceasing struggle with one or other of his restless neighbours. The result in each case may appear to have been small, and the balance of victory often doubtful; but on the whole the policy was successful. It gave peace to a vast region which for several centuries, had been disturbed by all the horrors of war, and thus rendered desolate. Whereas the Great Wall of Tsin Hoangti had failed to secure a permanent result, the activity and foresight of Taitsong accomplished the practical object more efficiently, and with more decisive consequences.

The very year of Taitsong's accession hostilities with these turbulent neighbours broke out on a large scale. They had been vanquished in several en-

counters a few years before; but, like the snow of early winter, they had melted only to come together again. Scarcely seated on the throne Taitsong found himself called upon to repel the onslaught of a hundred thousand fierce and implacable assailants. This horde, for it would be a mistake to apply the term army to most of the expeditions fitted out against China in the regions of Central Asia, carried everything before it on this occasion up to the neighbourhood of the capital; and, although Taitsong* haughtily refused to comply with the terms proposed by a Tartar envoy for an arrangement, it does not appear that he drove them back by force of arms. It is recorded that he advanced at the head of a few hundred horsemen to the outside of their encampment, and reproached their leaders with their duplicity and want of faith. The effect of his words is represented to have been electrical. Descending from their horses

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* A book could be filled with the great speeches and statesman-like comments on the art of government of which Taitsong was the author, most of which he collected and published in his "Golden Mirror." It would be impossible to give a tithe of those we should like to have quoted. The reply to this Tartar envoy is too characteristic, however, to be passed over: "Is it thus that your two Khans trifle with the faith of treaties? Hardly have I made an alliance with them, hardly have I sent laden with my presents in gold and silk to Kieili (one of them) the princess whom he asked for in marriage, than they come like brigands to ravage my territory. Are these proceedings worthy, I will not say of princes, but of men possessing the least spark of honour? If they forget the benefits they have received from me, at the least they ought to be mindful of their oaths. Have they persuaded themselves that, intimidated by their force, I will suffer them to insult me with impunity, and that I have not the power to chastise them for their temerity. I had sworn a peace with them; they are now violating it, and by that they place the justice of the question on my side."—Mailla, vol. vi. p. 42.

the Tartar generals, struck by his majestic air, acknowledged their faults, and promised to amend their ways. A subsequent meeting took place on the Pienkiao bridge over the Weichoui River, where peace was concluded and the Tartars retired. On this occasion the vows of friendship and the other stipulations of the treaty were sworn over the body of a white horse offered up to the deity who presides over the relations of neighbouring states.

Having thus repelled or turned aside this hostile invasion Taitsong devoted most of his attention to the organisation of his army* and to the improvement of the military knowledge of his officers. Many defects existed in the former, and the state of the latter was at a low ebb. Chinese armies had at the best, up to this point, been little more than a raw militia, and in their constant struggles with their Tartar neighbours it had always been an admitted fact that the Chinese soldier was the inferior of his opponent. Taitsong resolved to remedy this defect, and to make the Chinese soldier individually the match for any an-

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* The following description of Taitsong's army is extracted from Pauthier's work, already greatly quoted, p. 292: "The military was drawn up after a new fashion. It was divided into 895 corps of the same name, but of three different ranks. Those of the superior rank consisted of 1,200 men each, those of the intermediary of 1,000 men each, and those of the inferior of 800 men each." This force gave an approximate total of 900,000 men; 634 of these regiments were retained for service within the frontier, and to the 261 remaining was allotted the task of guarding the western frontiers. It was not considered desirable to entrust the guard of the capital and palace to any special force, and this service was performed now by one corps and again by another at the command not of the ministers but of the Tribunal of War. For further details of interest see as above.

tagonist he would be likely to have to encounter. In this he had to first overcome the bitter opposition of the lettered classes, who thought the duties of a military commander derogatory to the dignity of the Emperor; but Taitsong was not to be turned by their irrelevant, if not antiquated, representations from the path of duty which he had marked out for himself. The foundation on which he based his policy was that, in order to enjoy peace, it was necessary to be prepared for war; and he therefore passed much of his time in drilling his troops and in accustoming them to the use of arms. Every day he was to be seen inspecting a few companies of his army on the parade-ground in front of his palace, and he rewarded after no stinted fashion those who showed superior skill in the use of the bow or the pike. It was his delight to surround himself with armed men, although this "impropriety"* excited the disapproval of his grave courtiers. Undisturbed by either the remonstrances of the slaves of etiquette or the warnings of the over-cautious, Taitsong steadily continued his military reforms, thus obtaining both for himself and his country an element of strength which previous rulers had not possessed.

Within a very few years the occasion offered for testing the efficiency of the machine which he had elaborated. The Turk tribes, who had sworn peace for a second

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* A remonstrance was lodged against it, to which Taitsong replied that "as he considered his people as a father did his children, he could not conceive it possible they should meditate harm against his person."—Mailla, vol. vi. p. 46.

time at the bridge of Pienkiao, were again in a state of agitation and commotion. The cow-tail banner* of the Tartars had again been flaunted in the air, and it was evident that the long-standing quarrel between these irreconcilable foes was on the point of breaking out into a fresh flame. A Chinese army marched into the desert and compelled the dissolution of the confederacy that had been hastily formed. The newly-organised army earned its first laurels in a bloodless campaign, and Taitsong had the satisfaction of seeing in the incapacity of his old enemies to resist his arms the clearest proof of the use and value of his preparations. On this occasion Taitsong incorporated with his title of Emperor of China the minor rank of Khan of the Tartars, and it was by the latter† that he claimed to have a right to regulate the affairs of those peoples. Several of the most prominent of the Tartar khans submitted to him, and became his faithful and devoted followers. His actual conquests extended into the desert of Gobi, but his influence was spread over a much wider area. Embassies from distant kingdoms came to solicit at his hands the favour of his laws, and to study from a near view the principles of government which he successfully carried into practice. Within three years of his accession he had attained these great results, but it had been exclusively by means of the army to which he had devoted all his leisure and energy.

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* Mailla, vol. vi. p. 63.

† Tien Khan. This custom still prevails. It is as the Bogdo Khan that the Chinese Emperor exercises authority over the tribes of the desert and of the valleys of the Tian Shan.

The necessity of establishing his authority on a firm basis was imperative, and every other consideration had to give place to it as of minor importance; but Taitsong, amid the glitter and clash of arms, was far from forgetting that a great ruler is expected to show other qualities besides those of the soldier. If half the time he spent in the service of the state was devoted to the disciplining of his troops, the other half was passed not less actively in arranging and providing for the domestic administration of his people. Arbitrary taxes removed, and the finances adjusted on a sound foundation, proved his skill as a financier, while showing that he knew where best to assist his people in their efforts towards attaining a permanent and solid prosperity. Neither superstitious nor a fatalist he was opposed on principle to the innovations of Buddhism, and strove to set his people an example rather of pure morality than of religious zeal. To Confucius he wished to pay exceptional honours, and was never tired of quoting his precepts as the acme of human wisdom. He once declared that they, and the expressions of other philosophers of the same school, were "for the Chinese what the water is for the fishes."

Taitsong was assisted in his labours by his wife,*

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* One of Taitsong's first acts had been to send to their homes a large number of the concubines kept in the palace at the expense of the nation by his predecessors. Three thousand were sent to their homes at one time, and at a later period they were followed by three thousand more. According to the "Li-ki," an Emperor might have one Empress, three Fougin, or queens, nine Pin, inferior queens, thirty-seven Chifou, and eighty-one Yutsi, or

the Empress Changsunchi, a woman not more remarkable for her talent than for the good sense which guided all her actions. Changsunchi was far from being the first great woman in her exalted position in the history of her country, but she certainly was among the very few, if not the foremost of them, not to abuse her position or the influence she obtained over the mind of her husband. By restricting herself to her proper sphere she continued to enjoy throughout her life the confidence of her husband and the affection of the people. The force of her example made itself felt throughout the country, and the nation, proud of the morality and honourable conduct practised at the palace and the court, sought to emulate them by cultivating the domestic virtues. The simplicity of life to which this great Empress endeavoured to accustom both her children, and those who surrounded her, was tersely expressed by her in the noble sentiment that "the practice of virtue conferred honour on men, especially on princes, and not the splendour of their appointments." During ten years Changsunchi helped Taitsong in the government of the country, and on her deathbed, in A.D. 636, her last words were to counsel those around her to obey the Emperor in all things. Taitsong exclaimed when the sad news was brought to him that he had never sufficiently appreciated her merit, and in the fervour of

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concubines. Taitsong restricted the number to this not illiberal allowance, and thus reduced the palace charges, the standing grievance of the people.—See Mailla, vol. vi. p. 40; Pauthier, p. 286.

his regret ordered her to receive the funeral honours accorded to the person of a deceased ruler. Changsunchi had taken a great part in the measures passed by Taitsong for the advancement of the education of the people. The great college and the Imperial Library, which adorned the capital, had come into existence as much under her auspices as under his; and when he added at a later period eighteen hundred rooms for additional students at the college it was doubtless done in memory of the woman who had so greatly assisted him in the discharge of his various duties. After Changsunchi's death Taitsong appears to have lost something of the happy spontaneity of the governing art. Certain it is that the disasters, which, serious as they were, could not dim the splendour of his reign, occurred after he had lost the womanly counsel and shrewd judgment of Changsunchi.

In the year A.D. 634 envoys reached Singan for the first time from the kingdom of Toufan, Toupo or Tibet. Up to the close of the sixth century of our era the vast plateau known by this name, and watered in its southern and less elevated portion by the great river Sanpu, had been inhabited by a number of tribes independent of each other, and ruled by their own chiefs.* The natural consequence had ensued here as elsewhere in the world, and one of these chiefs had, at the time when the Souis were consolidating their position, subdued his neighbours, and founded a

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* See for early history of Tibet an interesting paper in "Journal of Royal Asiatic Society," vol. xii. part 4, October 1880, by Dr. Bushell of the Pekin Legation.

kingdom of considerable dimensions. This prince marched on one occasion into Central India, and when he died he left his son an army computed to number one hundred thousand men. It was from this son,* whose title was Sanpou, meaning the brave lord, that the envoys came, and after a brief residence at the Chinese capital they returned laden with presents to their country. Four years later a return Chinese mission was sent to Tibet, where it received a very honourable reception, and the Sanpou wishing to draw tighter the bonds of amity with the Emperor, made a request that he should be sent a Chinese princess in marriage. This favour Taitsong refused, and the Sanpou, dissappointed at what he held to be a slight to his dignity, raised a large army and marched into the districts bordering on Szchuen. He announced that he had come to receive and escort back to his country the princess whom he had demanded from the Emperor. Taitsong sent an army to defend the frontier, and, the Sanpou being worsted in the single engagement of the war, peace was concluded by a fresh recognition of China's supremacy. The Tibetan ruler acknowledged himself a Chinese vassal, paid a fine of five thousand ounces of gold, and returned with the Princess Wencheng, whom Taitsong gave him to wife. The Tibetan king adopted Chinese customs, and gave up his native barbarism. He abolished at the desire of his Chinese wife the national practice of painting the face, and he

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* Named Chitsunglungtsan.

built her a walled city "to proclaim his glory to after generations." Taitsong's relations with his son-in-law continued throughout his reign to be those of friendship and alliance.

The same year, which was marked by the advance of the Tibetan ruler, witnessed a fresh triumph for Taitsong's arms in the Gobi region. For the first time the region, now known as Eastern Turkestan or Kashgaria, was included in the actual administration of China. Divided into four districts it formed with the whole of Tangut the province of Loungsi, and effectually cut off all possibility of communication between the peoples on the western and northern frontiers, all naturally hostile to the Chinese. Kucha, Khoten, Karashar and Kashgar then became for the first time the headquarters of permanent officials of the Chinese Emperor. They had often before seen Chinese armies, and their native rulers had been fain to admit the supremacy of the Emperor; but Taitsong was the first to appoint his own deputies in those remote places. Hamil and Turfan became also the centres of separate governments. Taitsong did not carry out this policy without encountering great opposition from several of his ministers, and Wei Ching in particular protested against the unnecessary extension, as he termed it, of the Empire. Taitsong listened patiently to their remonstrances, but pursued nevertheless the even tenour of his way; and having the good fortune to possess a capable general in Lichitsi, the Warden of the Westen Marches, the gloomy anticipations of the timid were not realised.

Taitsong's personal courage brought him into several dangerous predicaments,* but the greatest peril he had to encounter was caused by his own son. Lichingkien, the eldest of his sons, had been nominated heir-apparent early in the reign, and in A.D. 643, anxious to forestall his inheritance, he formed a plot, assisted by some of the discontented spirits always to be found at a court, with the object of deposing his father. Their secret was badly kept, and before the plot was fully ripe the whole scheme was revealed to Taitsong. The conspirators were promptly arrested, and the heir-apparent was dismissed from his high rank, while the humbler of his supporters were handed over to the public executioner. The efforts of the disaffected were thus foiled, and Taitsong's position became more firmly fixed in the affections of the people because a glimpse had been afforded of what might happen when a new ruler occupied his place.

The most critical event in Taitsong's reign—his war with Corea†—has now to be described. The king of that country had never been a willing vassal of the Chinese Emperor, and shook off at any favourable opportunity the slight control claimed over his movements. The consolidation of the Empire under the Tangs had so far not been accompanied by any

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* Taitsong was a great hunter, and on one occasion he was attacked by, and slew in single encounter, a monstrous boar. Another time a Tartar in his service attempted to assassinate him, but after a desperate struggle, in which Taitsong took an active part, the would-be assassin was foiled in his attempt.

† For an interesting account of the internal condition of Corea at this time, see Mr. Ross's "Corea," pp. 149–151.

expression on the part of the King of Corea that he either desired, or held it incumbent upon him, to send tribute to, or maintain friendly relations with the Son of Heaven.* In A.D. 643 he was accused of molesting the smaller ruler of Sinlo,† who sent a mission to Changnan to solicit the aid of Taitsong against the aggressor. In Corea, or Kaoli as it was then called, the governing power had about this time been seized by a great noble named Chuen Gaisoowun, who had murdered his sovereign, and when Taitsong's envoy arrived he was treated with contemptuous indifference and sent back to Changnan without attaining any of the objects of his mission. A large Chinese army was despatched to the frontier and held in readiness to cross it, when Gaisoowun, appalled at the danger which threatened him, sent the required tribute and promised to abstain from attacking any people under the Emperor's protection. It is evident from other circumstances that Taitsong was more resolved to administer to Gaisoowun a chastisement in accordance with his crimes than to take him into alliance with the Empire. So it turned out that Gaisoowun's presents were not accepted, and that his envoys were sent back without being granted an audience. Both sides thereupon prepared for the war thus rendered inevitable.

Taitsong himself proceeded to the frontier and assumed the supreme control of the military operations; and Lichitsi was entrusted with the chief command

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* A title of the Emperor of China.
† A district in the south of Corea.

under him. The total force numbered about one hundred thousand regular soldiers, besides auxiliaries, and a flotilla of five hundred vessels co-operated with the main attack from the sea. Taitsong issued a proclamation to the effect that he was coming to punish, not a people, whose interests he claimed to have at heart, but an individual. It was not upon the Coreans that he threatened to bring the plague of war, but simply against the regicide, Gaisoowun.

At first the Imperialists carried everything before them. The towns of Kaimow and Bisha* surrendered to them after a show of resistance, and the Coreans saw their line of defence pierced by their more numerous and better prepared enemy. Outside the town of Leaoutung Lichitsi won a very considerable action, defeating a Corean army of forty thousand men, and then laid siege to the place itself. The town, defended by a large garrison, was beleaguered with greater vigour after the arrival of the Emperor, who took an active personal part in the operations. Indeed, it was under his immediate supervision that the final assault was conducted, and his own suggestion of firing the gate proved the turning point in the day. Under cover of the smoke the Imperialists forced their way through the breach, and the city was at their mercy. Ten thousand Coreans were slain and numbers were taken prisoners, while Taitsong admitted a loss of twenty-five thousand men, the flower of his army. Such was

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* Modern Kaichow and Haichung.

the great siege of Leaoutung, the most obstinately contested struggle in which Taitsong had been yet engaged. A similar success, purchased at less cost, however, was obtained at Baiyen, and Taitsong, continuing his march, sat down before the walls of Anshu. The crisis of the war had now been reached.

The main body of the Coreans had long been gathering its strength together, and at this point in the campaign a hundred and fifty thousand men had been collected and sent across the Yaloo river to encounter the Chinese army, which had been reduced to less than fifty thousand men. But Taitsong at once left his position and attacked the Corean army on three sides, driving it from the field with the loss of twenty thousand men, and of a vast quantity of plunder in the shape of spoils of war. Taitsong then turned all his attention to the prosecution of the siege of Anshu, but the garrison resisted with the courage of despair. At one moment it was on the point of surrender, when a successful sortie deprived the Chinese of the advantage they had momentarily gained. After a siege of more than two months Taitsong found himself compelled, by the want of provisions and the approach of winter, to order a retreat, thus losing the fruits of an arduous campaign, which had, on the whole, been conducted with remarkable success. As the Imperialist army broke up from its quarters, the gallant commandant appeared upon the walls and wished the troops "a pleasant journey." But even after the failure of his schemes Taitsong was too truly great to indulge any

spirit of spite against the people who had so bravely opposed him. Fourteen thousand Coreans remained prisoners in his hands, and he was advised to distribute them as slaves among his soldiers. His heart revolted against the cruelty of treating brave men in this fashion, and he accordingly gave them their liberty and allotted them lands within the frontier. Taitsong sent several smaller expeditions against Corea and its defiant Prince Gaisoowun during the last three years of his reign; but, although he meditated renewing his former attack, his life closed without anything having been accomplished towards the punishment of the regicide. The Corean question was left for his successors to grapple with—the one difficulty which had proved more than the power and ability of Taitsong could overcome.

Although as a feat of arms the campaign in Corea had been far from inglorious, its untoward conclusion made a great impression on the mind of Taitsong, and after his return he suffered from ill-health and loss of spirit. He saw that his end was approaching, and passed his time in drawing up for the instruction of his son that great work on the art of government which bears the title of the Golden Mirror.* His acts were still marked by the clemency and kindly feeling which were his principal characteristics; but it was evident that what he most desired was rest. In A.D. 649, twenty-three years after he succeeded his father Kaotsou, his malady assumed a serious form, and the

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* Du Halde gives numerous extracts from this work.

great Emperor disappeared from a scene on which he had played so prominent a part. He was mourned by his subjects with a grief the sincerity of which cannot be impugned, and several of his generals were so attached to his person that it was with difficulty they were prevented from immolating themselves on his grave. A statue to his memory was placed outside the Northern Gate, or that of the warriors, by fourteen Tartar officers in his service. The envoys from foreign states in the capital put on mourning, and many demonstrated their grief by cutting their hair, or sprinkling the bier of the deceased prince with their blood.*

Taitsong well deserved these manifestations of his people's love. No ruler of any country has had sounder claims to the title of Great than this Chinese Emperor. His courage, military knowledge, and the genius which is alone given to great captains were of the highest order. He had passed thirty years of his life in the field, and with the exception of the repulse at Anshu had never known the meaning of a reverse. His soldiers, officers and men, loved him and obeyed his slightest bidding, because they found him always studious of their comfort, and willing to incur as great inconvenience and danger as "the meanest peasant in his camp." Yet at the same time he was so far ahead of his age that he endeavoured to mitigate the terrors of war, and on one occasion ransomed a captured city from his soldiers in order to

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* Pauthier, p. 295.

save its inhabitants from the horrors of a sack.* In his administration he legislated for the mass of the people, making his main object the attainment of the following results, the security of life and property, a high state of national prosperity by means of low taxes and the encouraging of commerce, and the spreading of a healthy and enlightened spirit among his subjects by a system of national education. To the end he showed himself as singularly free from the lust of power, as from the love of pomp and idle show. He repressed flatterers, slighted those backbiters who, conscious of their own defects, strive, both then and now, to destroy the merit of others by traducing their worth, and banished from his court the knave, the hypocrite and the charlatan who had prospered under previous rulers by humouring the human weakness of the sovereign. Having given China the blessings of peace and settled government, he appears to have been actuated by the noble desire to bestow upon the neighbouring peoples the benefit of the same advantages, and all his conquests were justified by the motives which led him to undertake them. They were doubly justified by the results which followed them. All this and more might be truly said of this great ruler; and it is surely enough to place Taitsong in the same rank as Cæsar, and those other great rulers who were not merely soldiers and conquerors, but also legislators and administrators of the first rank. If we candidly consider the civilised and truly Christian spirit of

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* This was ten centuries before Tilly and Pappenheim.

Taitsong* it is difficult to find among the great men of the world one with a right to have precedence before him.†

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* From an inscription on a stone found at Singanfoo in A.D. 1625 and placed there in A.D. 781, it is surmised that a colony of Christians resided there at the time when Taitsong was Emperor. The inscription speaks in very eulogistic terms of this ruler, and refers specifically to Olopen, a native of Tatsin, that is the Roman Empire, at that time represented by the Byzantine Empire. There is nothing improbable in this, and the reader will find arguments in its favour in the inscription quoted in the supplement to D'Herbelot's great work by the Père Visdelou. See also Gaubil, "Histoire des Thangs," t. xv. p. 446, &c.; Pauthier, p. 297–300; Mailla, vol. vi. p. 319. On the other hand, Olopen may very possibly have been a member of some other creed of which the Chinese knew about as little as they believed in it.

† It was during Taitsong's reign that the celebrated Hwen Thsang travelled to India, and visited the countries of the Oxus and the Jaxartes. He set out in the year A.D 629, and returned, sixteen years later, in A.D. 645. See the "Histoire de la Vie de Hiouen Thsang," par Stanislas Julien, the famous Sinologue.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TANG DYNASTY (*continued*).

Kaotsong to Tetsong.

Kaotsong.—Marries his Father's Widow.—The Empress Wou.—Murders her Rivals.—Consolidates her Position.—Gradually usurps the Governing Power.—Foreign Relations.—Tartars, Tibet and Corea.—War with Tibet.—A Truce.—Outbreak of Fresh Hostilities.—Victory of Tibetans.—Frontier Defences.—Corea.—Conquest of Baiji.—Kaoli.—The Japanese.—Victory of Chinese.—Destruction of Japanese Fleet.—Energy of Empress Wou.—Incorporation of Sinlo.—The Reward of Victory.—Central Asia.—Souting Fang.—The Arabs.—Persia asks for Aid.—A Persian Prince at Singan.—A Census.—Death of Kaotsong.—Chongtsong.—The Empress Wou seizes Power.—Shows herself worthy of her place.—Growing Opposition.—Changes name of Dynasty.—Her Spies.—A Favourite.—The Tibetans.—The Khitans.—Metcho.—Khan of the Turks.—Deposition of Wou.—Conquered by Years, not Man.—Return of Chongtsong.—Another Woman.—Prince Litan.—Joui Song.—Mingti or Hiuentsong.—Good Intentions.—Improvements in Astronomical Observations.—Honours to Confucius.—King of Literature.—A Tortuous Policy.—Chinese Princess sent to Tibet.—Tibetan Incursions.—Doubtful Victories.—Loss of a General.—A Treaty.—"No Plundering or Oppression."—Poulin.—Subdued by Tibetans.—Desperate Fighting.—Disasters.—Yunnan.—Ganlochan.—A Successful Rebel.—Loyang Taken.—"Is it Possible?"—Abdication.—The Hanlin College.—Soutsong.—Mercenaries.—Plunder of Singan.—Siege of Taiyuen.—Likwangpi.—Valiant Defence.—Cannon or Catapults.—Kwo Tsey.—

Singan Retaken.—Sseseming.—Chehou.—Ssechaoy.—A Festival of Murders.—Taitsong II.—Tibetans Again.—Kwo Tsey's Skill. — Jihchin. — Tetsong. — Rebukes Prevailing Superstition.—Kwo Tsey.—A Great General and Man.—A Census.—Disturbances.—The Right of Hereditary Succession. —Chutse's Rising. — Proclamation to the People. — The Eunuchs.—Causes Operating towards Decline of Tangs.—Chuntsong.

KAOTSONG, Taitsong's son and successor, mounted the throne without opposition, and during a reign of more than thirty years he maintained at its height the great Empire formed by his father. In a strict sense this was not due to his own exertions, for early in his reign he gave himself up to the enjoyment of his ease, and entrusted to other hands the task of governing his people. No evil ensued from this abnegation of authority, because it fortunately happened that his representatives proved singularly capable in the administration of public affairs.

When Kaotsong had been five years on the throne he resolved to marry the Princess Chang or Wou, one of the widows of his father Taitsong. The Princess Wou had retired into a Buddhist convent after the death of her first lord, and Kaotsong encountered the strenuous opposition of his ministers when he announced his intention of bringing her out for the purpose of making her his Empress. Kaotsong was fully determined to have his own way in this matter, and, in A.D. 655, his lawful Empress was deposed to give place to the Princess Wou. Her first acts showed the ascendency she had already acquired over her lover, who soon became a mere tool in the hands of this ambitious

woman. Distrusting the influence which the deposed Empress and another of the principal queens might still retain over the mind of Kaotsong, who had allotted these fallen stars apartments in the palace, Wou came to the conclusion that it would be prudent to sweep them from her path while yet Kaotsong's passion was warm. At her command they cast these unhappy women into a vase filled with wine, having previously cut off their hands and feet. As it has been tersely put, the Empress Wou willed it, and Kaotsong could only obey.

The new Empress then turned all her attention to the thwarting of the plans formed for her overthrow by numerous enemies. Her son was proclaimed heir apparent, and those among the magnates who were either hostile to, or lukewarm in, her interests were deposed from their position and cast into prison, where the steel or the cup very soon freed Wou from apprehensions on their score. Her next object was to assume some of the functions of supreme authority. At first she put herself forward merely as assisting the Emperor in his great labours, and, being quick in comprehending the questions of state that were brought before the Council Board, and deft with her pencil in the cabinet, Kaotsong found her ready wit of great use in grappling with difficulties for which he was incapable of suggesting a remedy. Empress Wou showed no common tact in the skilful manner in which she led the Emperor on from one concession of authority to another, until at length Kaotsong virtually retired from the position of Emperor, preserving indeed

the rank, but leaving in his wife's hands the reality of power. The Empress Wou continued absolute ruler of the Empire until her death, more than forty years after the time when Kaotsong resigned his power into her hands.

While such was the course of events at the capital, there had been much of interest and importance happening on the widely extended frontiers of the Empire. The foreign relations of the country resolved themselves under three heads, those with Tibet, with Corea, and with the Tartar tribes of Central Asia and the north-western frontier. The Sanpou who married the Princess Wencheng died the year after Taitsong, and, during Kaotsong's reign, his grandson was King of Tibet. The relations between the Chinese government and this tributary state were not as satisfactory as they had been in the time of Taitsong. The new Sanpou, a young and warlike prince, carried on several wars with his northern and eastern neighbours who were also dependent on the Chinese. His measures were crowned with success, and the kingdom of Tibet was gradually extending its limits over a wide area, including several districts bordering on the frontier of China Proper. This was very distasteful to the Chinese, who wished all the country to the west of their territory to remain parcelled out among petty potentates, who should always be in a state of greater or less impotence, and as often as possible knit by a common tie to the Chinese Emperor. The successes and warlike character of the Tibetan ruler threatened this state of things with no long continuance; and a

correspondence of a recriminatory character was carried on between the Singan authorities and the Sanpou of Tibet. In A.D. 670 the dispute reached such a pass that a Chinese army was sent to inflict chastisement on the ambitious ruler who was fast uniting the Himalayan regions under his sway, but it fared badly at the hands of the mountaineers. Defeated in two battles on the Shensi frontier Kaotsong's general was compelled to beat a hasty retreat into Szchuen. A truce appears to have been then arranged, for a Tibetan envoy is found the following year at Singan, whither he had brought presents or tribute from his master.

The truce proved short-lived. Encouraged, no doubt, by his success the Sanpou resumed with greater vigour than before his inroads into the neighbouring states. In A.D. 678 a large army computed to exceed one hundred and fifty thousand men* was directed to invade Tibet, but again the Tibetans were victorious. Only the relics of one division of this great force succeeded in regaining China, while the second had to fight its way back, making good its retreat by its own valour. After this reverse the Chinese were only able to guard the frontier, and had to leave the Tibetans to their own devices.† The Tibetans were repulsed in several attacks on the frontier posts, and the death of their ruler, who was succeeded by a child, predisposed them still more strongly in favour of peace.

The Imperial arms had been attended with better

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* See Mailla, vol. vi. pp. 151–152; also Dr. Bushell's paper.
† Kaotsong calls them "a thorn in our side for years."

fortune in the direction of Corea, where the task left unfinished by Taitsong was completed by the generals of his son. In A.D. 658, and again in A.D. 660, the Chinese won several battles over the Coreans, and an expedition sent by sea in the latter year effected the conquest of Baiji, the eastern portion of the peninsula. During the ten following years the Chinese carried on a bitter struggle with the inhabitants of Baiji and the patriotic King of Kaoli, who called in the Japanese* to his assistance. The Empress Wou threw all her energy into the struggle, and fitting out fleets and fresh armies concentrated the whole strength of the Empire in overcoming the opposition of the Coreans. The allied forces of the Japanese and the Coreans were defeated in four separate encounters, and the fleet in which the Japanese had crossed the sea was almost totally destroyed. The flames of four hundred of the best war junks of Yeddo lit up the Northern Sea, and it is doubtful if any of the expedition returned to Japan to tell the tale of their defeat. In A.D. 674 the King of Sinlo, having shown great pusillanimity in assisting the Chinese, who came as his allies, was deposed, and his territory was incorporated with the Empire; and from this time for a period of nearly sixty years little is heard of Corea. It remained a Chinese possession, and its people, not forgetting the tradition of their freedom, set themselves to the task of recovering the material pros-

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* This is the first occasion of these islanders interfering in the affairs of the mainland.

perity which had been lost during a century of desperate strife. The Chinese government had accomplished its purpose at immense sacrifice, and it may be doubted whether it derived any adequate advantage from its costly victory.

In Central Asia the Chinese authority was maintained at its full height. Souting Fang obtained several decisive victories over the Turks in Western Asia, and in the commotion caused by the campaigns of the Arabs in the countries of the Oxus and the Jaxartes, the Chinese Viceroys in Kashgar adopted an observant attitude towards the belligerents. They claimed to be the arbiters of the question, but peace did not result from their arbitration. The ruler of Persia demanded at this period their assistance against the fanatical warriors issuing from Arabia with the Koran in one hand and the scimitar in the other; but Kaotsong was compelled to reply that Persia was too far distant for him to send an army to her aid. A Persian prince, the son of Isdegard, King of Persia, was for some time resident at Singan, and Kaotsong caused him to be proclaimed king* on his father's death. He was driven out of his country by the Arabs, who sent an embassy to Kaotsong about the year A.D. 655. At this epoch it is also recorded that no fewer than three embassies arrived at different periods from the Kings of India.† From these facts it is sufficiently clear that the Chinese had the good

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* Pilousse, probably Feroz, was appointed, in A.D. 674, captain of the guards at Singan.

† Five kings are mentioned by name.—Pauthier, p. 301.

sense not to throw themselves in the path of the advancing tide of Mahomedanism, but by nursing their strength they were able to maintain their authority undisturbed over their own provinces.*

In A.D. 683 Kaotsong's death, after a nominal reign of thirty-three years, produced a break in the progress of affairs, and threatened the position of the Empress Wou. She showed herself equal to the occasion, and asserted herself in the administration of the country more emphatically after her husband's death than she had before.

Chongtsong,† the eldest son of Kaotsong, was proclaimed Emperor in accordance with his father's will, but he reigned only a few days. The Empress Wou availed herself of a decree passed in favour of the family of the new Emperor's wife to take steps for his deposition, and, having quickly executed her purpose, she again assumed the supreme power surrendered only with reluctance. Having gone so far and having banished Chongtsong and his family, she determined to carry matters with a high hand. She put forward indeed another prince as nominal Emperor,‡ and ruled in his name, but he was only a shadow. The Empress transacted all public business, received petitions, and disposed of the chief offices in the Empire.

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* A census taken at this time gave eight millions of families, or fifty millions of persons, as the population of China Proper. China Proper then did not include Yunnan, Pechihli and great portions of Kansuh, Szchuen, Shansi, and Kwantung.

† Chinese history takes no notice of Wou's usurpation, and Chongtsong is considered Emperor from this year, A.D. 684 until A.D. 710.

‡ Prince Litan, afterwards Emperor Joui Song.

She erected temples to her ancestors, wore the robes of state restricted to an Emperor, and offered sacrifice to the great God of all. Though a woman, among a people who despised womankind as much as any race on earth, she seized all the attributes of power and authority handed down to a Chinese Emperor from immemorial antiquity, and, if she is to be judged by her acts, it must be allowed her that she triumphed manfully over her difficulties, and maintained the dignity of the throne in a manner becoming a great prince.

There were many who resented her arbitrary act in deposing Chongtsong. They could have forgiven her much tyranny within the chambers of the palace, and it would not have grieved them greatly had Chongtsong proved as pliable an instrument in her hands as Kaotsong had been. But that the Empress Wou should stand forth in the light of day as the actual ruler of China, and dispense in her name and of her own intuition the gifts of Imperial favour, was in contradiction of all precedent, and more than many could bear. She did not consider it necessary to dispel the growing opposition to her by any attempt at concealing the objects of her policy. Indeed she went out of her way to invite hostility by changing the name of the dynasty* and by distributing the great offices of state among the members of her own family. Several risings took place, and plots were formed for her assassination; but

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* Tang was altered to Chow and the family surname to Wou.

one and all failed. Her measures were too prompt for her opponents, and no matter how eminent the services or great the rank of the individual she ordered him to the block the moment he incurred her suspicion. Her spies were abroad in all directions, but their very numbers soon tended to defeat her object, as so many false accusations were brought before her. To provide against this evil she passed an edict punishing with death those who brought false accusations, and it happened one day that out of a thousand charges eight hundred and fifty were found to be false, when their promoters were executed. Her favourite plan of punishment for great nobles or ministers was death by execution in the streets of Singan, and the inhabitants came to regard these events with feelings very like those of our ancestors at the similar spectacles to be witnessed on Tower Hill and at Tyburn Gate.

The Empress Wou did not neglect other plans for advancing her objects and strengthening her hold upon the people's mind. She ruled the country with wisdom, and spared no effort to maintain the dignity of the nation. Her neighbours showed the same respect for her power as they had for that of her predecessors, and in all essentials the most exacting of her countrymen cannot but admit that she fulfilled every condition that may be demanded from a sovereign. While thus seeking to show her solid claims to the lofty position she had seized, she did not neglect any means of bringing home to the heart of the nation a sense of the great services she had rendered by her wise

government. She caused books to be written and circulated, while the ministers of religion were instructed to descant on her numerous virtues, and to point out how indispensable she was to the welfare of the state. By means such as these she maintained her supremacy for more than twenty years after the death of Kaotsong. The one act of weakness committed during her long career was her infatuation for a Buddhist priest, if indeed this is not the invention of her enemies who have spared no effort to blacken her character. However great may have been the degree of affection she felt towards him, she certainly did not suffer his influence to assert itself in the government of the state.

In A.D. 692 she sanctioned a scheme sent for her approval by the Governor of Sichow, the modern Turfan, for the reconquest of the districts seized by the Tibetans some years before. The scheme was approved, and the territory retaken after a sharp but decisive campaign. Four years afterwards war broke out afresh, and the balance of success was in favour of the Tibetans at first, but before long the superior skill and numbers of the Chinese told, when the results of the previous campaign were maintained. Early in the eighth century the Tibetans were visited by troubles of their own, their king was killed during an expedition into India, and they found more important matters to occupy their minds than unnecessary and unprofitable disputes with the Chinese.

A new enemy had risen up on the northern frontier in the person of the Khitans, a Tartar people in the

region immediately to the north of the province of Shensi, and as these threatened to become very formidable, the Empress found it politic to form an alliance with a Turk chief named Metcho, to whom she sent the patent of a Khan. A treaty was concluded in A.D. 697, but Metcho proved false to his engagements. He turned against the Chinese the arms he had received for their defence, and ravaged the border districts. On the approach of the Chinese army he retreated, having first put to the sword ten thousand captives taken during his expedition. These frontier wars will serve to show the numerous difficult questions which were constantly attracting the attention, and requiring the consideration of the Chinese ruler.

In the meantime the Empress Wou was suffering from the inevitable malady of humanity. The weight of eighty winters told its tale upon even her vigorous mind and ardent spirit. In A.D. 704 she was confined to her chamber with a serious illness, and her ministers were not admitted to her presence during several months. Her enemies seized the opportunity for which they had been long waiting, and, having slain the principal of her relations, they presented themselves in a body at the palace. Resistance was hopeless, and with a dignity which shines out through the grudging admission of the chronicler of the times, the Empress Wou handed to them the Imperial seal and the other insignia of royalty. She died the next year after what may be called her fall, leaving the mark of her influence clearly imprinted on the history of the period,

and standing forth prominently in the eyes of posterity as the woman who ruled the Chinese with a strong hand during more than forty years.*

The banished Emperor Chongtsong, who had been living in retirement for twenty years, was brought back and placed upon the throne. But the change of authority entailed no benefit for the people. Chongtsong gave himself up to his own pleasure, and left his wife as much of the task of government as he could. This negligence caused great discontent among those who had risked so much in opposing the Empress Wou with the intention of restoring the Tangs to their just authority. The new Empress and her favourite Sansu,† the governor of the palace, ordered things as they chose, until at length the great officials, disgusted with the tyranny under which they suffered, resolved to rid the country of an Emperor and his minions who entertained so poor an idea of the responsibilities of their station. While this plot was taking form the Empress herself was intriguing for the elevation of her son, and finding that Chongtsong was an impediment in her path she sent him a poisoned loaf of a kind to which he was very partial. The death of the Emperor precipitated the crisis. The great nobles rose under Chongtsong's brother Prince Litan, and the Empress and her minions were put to death without distinction to sex or person. Litan‡

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* The dynastic name was on her death changed back to Tang.

† A nephew of the Empress Wou.

‡ Litan was the puppet prince put forward in A.D. 684 by the Empress Wou.

was placed on the throne, and the people rejoiced in the final triumph of the Tangs over this second* attempt to transfer the supreme power to a different family. These events marked the year A.D. 710.

Litan took the name of Joui Song, but as he only reigned two years his career calls for no detailed notice. The principal event of his life was the selection of a successor. His eldest son Lichingki was held to have incontestably the prior claim, but his next brother Lilongki had proved himself to be a good soldier and a capable general. Joui Song's perplexity was removed by the voluntary abdication of his claims by Lichingki, who said that "in time of peace" the eldest should be allowed to enjoy his rights, but in "a season of great danger" the Empire should fall to the share of the one who was admittedly the abler of the two; so Lilongki was proclaimed heir apparent, and on his father's abdication† in A.D. 712 he became the Emperor Mingti‡ or Hiuentsong.

Mingti began his reign with the best intentions, and a full resolve to hand down his name to history as a second Taitsong. In fact, during his first years of power, he set himself to copy all the acts of that great prince, and never tired of quoting the maxims contained in the Golden Mirror. The reduction which he made in the expenses of the court, and the sump-

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* The first was of course that of the Empress Wou.

† Joui died four years later, A.D. 716.

‡ Mingti Hoangti, or Mingti, means the "Enlightened Emperor." Pauthier speaks of him by this title, Mailla and Du Halde as Hiuentsong.

tuary laws which he passed and was the foremost in obeying, were both welcome to a people on whom the hands of the farmers of taxes had recently lain heavy. He also endeavoured to improve the condition of his army, and by a series of reviews, which combined the character of an inspection with that of a meeting for military games, he encouraged that section of his subjects which contributed most to the maintenance of the Empire. Nor did he neglect the interests of science. During his reign the study of astronomy, and the observation of natural phenomena, in the earliest ages peculiar to China and Egypt of all countries, were placed on a new and improved basis;* while in recognition of his place in literature, quite as much as in his honour as a great religious teacher, Confucius was proclaimed a prince, and also awarded the title, which he would have prized more than the secular dignity, of King of Literature.

Notwithstanding these noble intentions, and the earnest which he gave during his first years of fulfilling them, the long reign of Mingti can only be considered a striking instance of how often acts falsify intentions and protestations. Mingti should have proved a second Taitsong; he was, in fact, nothing more than an illustrious failure. He aspired to re-establish the authority of his family on a sound basis, and some have credited him with success. But the writing of history is, in his case, far too clear to support such a view, for the plain truth is that he brought

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* Mailla, vol. vi. p. 210–211.

both the Chinese Empire, and the Tang dynasty to the verge of ruin. He appears to have been one of those men who raise their own difficulties, and who, when a simple and straightforward solution of a question presents itself, prefer to turn aside to follow a tortuous way of attaining their ends. It will also be seen that he failed to utilise his great power, and his adjustment of ways and means was neither skilful nor happy in its results.

Very early in his reign his attention was attracted to his relations with his neighbours. Both the Turk tribes and the people of Tibet were the cause of annoyance and danger to his subjects. Neither the one nor the other were inclined to forego their immemorial rights of encroaching on the settled districts, and of plundering the wealthy towns within the Chinese frontier whenever the supreme government seemed unable to act vigorously against them. Despite all Mingti's parade there was not much apprehension at his power among his neighbours. The charm of the good fortune and invincibility of the Tangs was being dispelled, and the course of events threatened to break it altogether.

In the year A.D. 710 another Chinese princess, by name Chincheng, had been sent to Tibet as wife to the Sanpou of that time; but it had not brought the good understanding which might have been expected. The Tibetans saw in the weakness of the Chinese garrisons, and the apathy of their commanders a great opportunity, and it is not in human nature to suppose that the highest object of any race, whether it be

mere greed of spoil or the promptings of a nobler ambition, can be protected against them by the flimsy barrier of a matrimonial alliance. Shortly after the marriage of this princess the Tibetans obtained the surrender of a large and important district contiguous to the upper waters of the Hoangho, thus touching the Tang dominions on the north as well as on the east. Instead of availing themselves of this new possession for purposes of trade, and for prosecuting friendly relations with the Empire, they made it the base for attacking the Chinese villages and towns in the neighbourhood. Encouraged by success they ventured to carry out an incursion on a large scale into Chinese territory, and inflicted an immense loss on the unoffending inhabitants of several districts. A Chinese army was promptly raised, succeeded in recovering a great portion of the booty, and drove the Tibetans into their own territory. This was but the beginning of a strife which continued as long as Mingti occupied the throne. The campaign in A.D. 727 was of exceptional bitterness, and varying fortune. The successes obtained in the field by the generals of Mingti were more than compensated for by the quicker movements of the Tibetans, who captured several towns, and generally deprived the Chinese of the reward of victory.

Risings on the part of the Turk tribes, and the pronounced hostility of the Khitan king in the north, further aggravated the situation, and prevented the Chinese devoting all their attention to the chastisement of the Tibetans, as they would have desired.

The most fortunate of Mingti's generals was slain in a petty skirmish with a robber clan, and the successors appointed to his place proved deficient in all the qualities required for the situation. But up to the year A.D. 730 the Chinese more than held their own despite the disadvantage of having to attend to other matters, and the treaty concluded in that year bound the Tibetans not to encroach beyond specified points.* A proclamation was sent out on both sides to the effect that "the two nations are at peace and there must be no plundering or oppression."†

Confined on the east, the Tibetans turned towards the west to find a vent for their restless energy. The state of Poulin, or Little Tibet, seemed to offer itself an easy prey to their attack. The King of Poulin appealed to China for assistance, and Mingti forbade the Tibetans to attack him. But this interference was more than they could be expected to brook. Without paying any heed to the summons, the Sanpou invaded Poulin, deposed its king, and annexed the state to his dominions. Mingti was very indignant at the indifference shown to his request, and he was easily persuaded that the opportunity of attacking Tibet, when its garrisons on the eastern frontier had been weakened for the war against Poulin, was too favourable to be neglected. He, therefore, sent a large army to the borders of Szchuen and Shensi, and the Tibetans, surprised and outnumbered, were worsted in several

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* Chihling, or the Red Hills, near the modern Sining, was the principal of them, and the terms of the treaty were cut on stone and placed there.

† Dr. Bushell's paper already mentioned.

encounters. For a few months Mingti indulged the hope that he had attained his object, but by that time the Tibetans had moved up fresh troops from the western districts, and were in readiness to resume the war. The Chinese commander was defeated with great loss in a pitched battle, when the advantage of a fortified position did not avail to turn the scale against the indignant impetuosity of the Tibetans. So far Mingti, therefore, reaped no solid advantage from his perfidy in breaking the treaty of A.D. 730. The death of the Princess Chincheng intensified the bitterness of the struggle, and Mingti abruptly refused to conclude a fresh peace when an envoy was sent to his court. In A.D. 749 the war reached its climax in the siege of Chepouching, which surrendered to the Chinese after a desperate defence of several weeks. It is admitted that the capture of this place cost the lives of more than thirty thousand men.

Against the Turks, the Khitans, and also in Yunnan, the Chinese arms were still more unfortunate. In A.D. 751 a Chinese army of thirty thousand men was destroyed to a man in the desert of Gobi, and throughout the whole of the reign, the Khitans and other Tartars on the northern frontier carried on a desultory warfare. In Yunnan, the neighbouring state of Nanchao had so long been the victim of the attacks of Chinese subjects that its king resolved to appeal to arms. Success attended his efforts, and the year A.D. 751 was marked by further disasters in this quarter. The local forces were defeated, and thirty-three towns, including Yunnanfoo, surrendered to the

invader. Three years later another Chinese army met with a defeat, scarcely less serious, in this same quarter, and it is stated that the losses of the army in this reign alone were nearly two hundred thousand men.

These reverses in the field proved the precursors of domestic troubles. They were a distinct incentive to the ambitious spirits in the country to fight for their own hand. Prominent among these was a soldier named Ganlochan, a man of Khitan race, but one who had distinguished himself in wars against his own people. Being trusted with the government of a province, he at once set himself the task of making himself independent therein; and when Mingti strove to induce him to visit the capital, he received the mandate of his sovereign with indifference and contempt. It was shortly after this that he felt strong enough to throw the mask aside altogether, and to appear as a rebel at the head of an armed force. The people, "unaccustomed by the long peace to the use of arms," surrendered without resistance, and Ganlochan found that his enterprise was succeeding beyond the limit of his hopes. In A.D. 755 he had subdued the greater portion of the northern provinces, and Loyang, a former capital of the Empire, had surrendered to his arms. When the news of the subjection of all the country north of the Hoangho reached Mingti, he exclaimed, "Is it possible?" thus reminding us of another historical character* who could only express surprise at the rapid progress of events.

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* Prince George of Denmark, the "Est il possible" of Macaulay's history.

Ganlochan emboldened by success, was far from resting satisfied with triumphs north of the Hoangho. The very facility with which he had prospered up to this point was one of the strongest inducements to prosecute his undertaking to what might be considered its logical and legitimate conclusion. Ganlochan suffered one severe defeat in the following year; but it could not arrest his career. He proceeded in person to the place of danger, and, having restored the balance of victory in his favour by the capture of the strong fortress Tunkwan, marched on the capital, which Mingti abandoned to its fate. Singan opened its gates to this would-be arbiter of the country's destiny, and suffered for some weeks from the exactions of a mercenary army, collected at the bidding of an adventurer who was far from being sure even of the objects he had in his own mind. Mingti, during his flight into Szchuen, abdicated the throne in favour of his son, who took the name of Soutsong. Mingti had reigned during a greater number of years than any other member of his House, but history has preserved the remembrance of no more solid achievement than that of the founding of the Hanlin College.* Fond of flattery, and strongly imbued with a sense of his own ineffable wisdom, Mingti appears to have been a great ruler in the sense that our James I. was a wise prince. Whereas the penalty of James's conceit and obstinacy

* The Hanlin College exists at the present day, and may be considered as resembling the French Academy. Like that institution, it is composed of forty members. Most of the great officials and all the historiographers have been members of the Hanlin College.—See Du Halde, vol. i. p. 401.

was paid by his son, Mingti lived long enough to suffer from similar defects in his own person. With that exception their characters seem to have been an exact counterpart.*

Soutsong appears to have been a brave prince, and set himself resolutely to the task of restoring the authority of his family. While his father fled for safety to the province of Szchuen, he placed himself at the head of such troops as he could collect, and prepared to dispute his inheritance with the victorious Ganlochan. The rebels were detained several months in front of the town of Yongkiu by the valour of its commandant, and time was thus afforded Soutsong to gather round him all those who wished to uphold the authority of the Tangs. A general named Kwo Tsey stood forward conspicuously at this period as the champion of the reigning House, and very soon Soutsong found himself at the head of an army of fifty thousand men. It is said that auxiliaries came from far distant Bokhara and the fertile valleys of Ferghana to swell the ranks of the Imperial forces. In face of this gathering strength of the Imperialists, Ganlochan thought it prudent to abandon Singan and to withdraw into Honan, north of the Hoangho. He plundered the capital, and embellished his city of Loyang with its spoil. The exactions which he sanctioned disgusted the people, and his authority was based on the sword alone. Still it was sufficiently

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* See for instances of this, his instructions about conduct of sieges in "Tang History," and also trait mentioned in Mailla, vol. vi. p. 231.

formidable in his own ability and that of his generals; and China was practically divided at this period into two states hostile to each other. The rulers and states dependent upon China seized the opportunity to recover their independence; and it would have gone much harder with the Chinese at this crisis had not the attention of the Turk and Tartar tribes been called off by the successes of the Arabs in Western Asia.

In A.D. 757, Ganlochan's best lieutenant Sseseming, laid siege to the fortress of Taiyuen, in Shansi, defended by a small but select garrison under the command of Likwangpi, Kwo Tsey's not unworthy comrade in arms. This siege is among the most celebrated in Chinese annals. Taiyuen is described as being then a place of some strength, surrounded with a wall of considerable thickness and a good ditch. Likwangpi spared no exertion to improve its defences, and we are led to believe that he constructed another rampart inside the town wall. The most remarkable preparation he made was, however, to construct cannons,* or catapults, capable of throwing a twelve-pound stone shot three hundred paces. When Sseseming appeared before the walls, therefore, he was well received; and during the thirty days that he remained in face of them, he failed to make any impression on the place. Likwangpi assumed a vigorous offensive as soon as he found the attack beginning to flag, and by means of his novel engines of war, as well as by constructing

* Pauthier speaks of them as cannons. They were more probably catapults.

mines under the besiegers' positions, he inflicted tremendous losses on the assailants. Sseseming was obliged to beat a hasty retreat, leaving in his trenches sixty thousand men out of an army of one hundred thousand. This decisive success gave greater stability to Soutsong's authority, and restored the courage of all those who were the supporters of the Tangs.

Soutsong then felt strong enough to march on Singan, and he entrusted the command of his army to Kwo Tsey. A desperate battle was fought outside Singan, in which the rebel forces were signally defeated, and the capital again fell into the possession of the Emperor. His victory on this occasion is attributed to the valour and steadiness of the Turk auxiliaries, who bore the brunt of the engagement. Meanwhile Ganlochan had been murdered at the command of his own son, who was in turn assassinated at a later period by Sseseming. These dissensions had greatly detracted from the strength of the rebellious faction; and a second victory, obtained by the skill of Kwo Tsey and the valour of the foreign mercenaries, resulted in the surrender of Loyang, which was given over to the soldiers to pillage. In gratitude for the timely help he had afforded, Soutsong gave Chehou, the principal of their leaders, twenty thousand pieces of silk, and promised him a like quantity every year. Much of the fruits of these successes was lost by the impolicy of certain of Soutsong's acts; and Sseseming headed a fresh rising in the last years of his reign. Sseseming was successful in wresting Loyang and a considerable

extent of country from the Emperor ; but his assassination by his son cut short a career which promised to be both remarkable and successful. Soutsong's death occurred at this moment to give a fresh complexion to the struggle. He died in the early part of A.D. 762, a few months after the death of his father, the preceding Emperor Mingti.

Soutsong's son followed him as the Emperor Taitsong the Second, and the first acts of his reign afforded promise of a brighter era. His first measure was to remove a too-powerful minister, and his next to take all the steps required for the suppression of the insurgents, who still remained defiant under Ssechaoy, the son and murderer of Sseseming. In fact, that chief was extending the limits of his authority when Taitsong turned his attention to the subject, and Likwangpi, the Imperial general, could barely hold his own against the rebels. In these straits Taitsong made overtures to the Tartar and Turk tribes, who sent a large force to co-operate with his army against the rebel Ssechaoy. Victory crowned the efforts of the allied forces, and the death of the rebel leader seemed to afford a prospect of peace and tranquillity. The country suffered greatly at the hands of the foreign mercenaries, who, during their return march, burnt and pillaged in all directions. Nor did the Empire long enjoy the peace which these victories in the domestic war seemed to promise. Its neighbours had not been indifferent witnesses of the discord prevailing in the state. The extremities to which the Emperor was reduced afforded them an

opportunity for indulging their propensity to rapine, which none of them were slow to seize.

Foremost among them, both by reason of their military strength, and also for the warlike characteristics of the people, were the Tibetans, who, having originally entered into relations with China on the terms of friends, had now become her most inveterate foes. Early in A.D. 763 they began to threaten the border districts and fortresses of the Empire, and, meeting with success above their expectations, they followed up their attack by sending the bulk of their army into China. Having captured the principal fortresses in the west of Shensi, they resolved to march on Singan, which lay exposed to their attack. A panic seized the population, and Taitsong himself became infected with it, and the Court set the bad example to the people of being the first to seek safety in flight. The Tibetans entered the capital without resistance, and remained there fifteen days. Having collected their plunder, they slowly retreated towards their homes.

In this crisis, Kwo Tsey came prominently forward, and with the small force at his disposal manœuvred with such skill that the Tibetans were fain to beat a more hurried retreat. They retained several of the strong places they had captured, and it was not until A.D. 765 that, on the renewal of the war, they were expelled from them with heavy loss by Jihchin, one of Taitsong's lieutenants. Their defeat culminated in the attack made upon them by their allies, the Huiho, who were won over by Kwo Tsey. An attempt was made

in A.D. 766 to close the struggle by a treaty of peace, but it proved abortive. The war lingered on, and each year witnessed fresh incursions on the part of the Tibetans. Seven years later they were, however, vanquished in a decisive battle by Kwo Tsey. If the details of these border wars have left no deep impression upon the record of the age, their consequence is at least written clearly in the plain statement of the census held during this reign. Whereas under Mingti the population had exceeded fifty-two millions, under Taitsong, in A.D. 764, it did not reach seventeen millions; and the national prosperity had declined in like proportion. In A.D. 779 Taitsong died after a troubled reign* of seventeen years, leaving to his son Tetsong the task of completing the pacification of a realm which it did not seem feasible to long hold together.

The first three years of Tetsong's reign were marked by the return of peace and prosperity to the realm, because Taitsong had practically left the government in the hands of the aged Kwo Tsey, whose spirit and energy had not been weakened by the weight of years. Under his advice Tetsong administered a grave rebuke to those who were always endeavouring either to cast the horoscope of the Empire, or to flatter

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* Among the events of his reign must be placed the death of Likwangpi, whose success as a military commander has been referred to. He died in A.D. 764, and is considered one of the best generals China ever possessed. His fidelity to the cause of the reigning House was not less remarkable at that age than his ability. He is represented as a strict disciplinarian, who never attempted anything save after deliberate reflection, and always succeeded in what he undertook. He would have been the celebrity of the period but that Kwo Tsey's achievements overshadowed his.—Mailla, vol. vi. pp. 301–302.

the idiosyncrasies of the prince by reporting, or more often inventing out of their own imagination, such abnormal circumstances as might appear susceptible of a hidden interpretation. Against these superstitions, and those who prospered by their propagation, the following proclamation, framed by Kwo Tsey, delivered a shrewd blow. "Peace and the general contentment of the people," so ran this edict, "the abundance of the harvest, skill and wisdom shown in the administration, these are prognostics which I hear of with pleasure; but 'extraordinary clouds,' 'rare animals,' 'plants before unknown,' 'monsters,' and other astonishing productions of nature, what good can any of these do men? I forbid such things to be brought to my notice in the future." This protest against prevailing superstition came opportunely at a time when, because the year happened to be that dedicated to the horse, it was forbidden to travel on that useful animal along the public roads. Well might Tetsong exclaim, "Is it possible that any one can make the lives of men depend on such dreams as these?" The return of prosperity was shown by the census taken in A.D. 780, when the population was found to have risen to nineteen millions. The revenue was placed at thirty-one millions of taels in money,* and twenty millions of a measure of grain, computed at one hundred pounds in weight.

With the death of Kwo Tsey in A.D. 781, Tetsong lost the mainstay of his Empire. It was said of him that

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* About ten millions of our present money.

he had risen to the lofty and onerous position of commander-in-chief after passing through no fewer than twenty-four different grades, in each and all of which he distinguished himself by his capacity. But for his great military qualities, and the sterling integrity which he showed in its service, the Tang dynasty would, beyond doubt, have gone the way of its predecessors. There were those who advised Kwo Tsey to cast his allegiance to the winds and to place himself upon the throne, but his steadfast reply was that he was "a general of the Tangs." He remained constant in his trust until his death at the patriarchal age of eighty-five, setting to all an example of virtue and devotion to the public service that in that day found few imitators, and leaving behind him among his own people the same reputation that Belisarius left among the Romans of the later Empire. Kwo Tsey was the more fortunate in that he died as he lived the object of his sovereign's gratitude and esteem.*

The death of Kwo Tsey was the signal for the outbreak of disturbances within the realm. The previous Emperor had promised, at a time when he was hard pressed, some of the great governors that he would renew the ancient practice of making their dignities hereditary, a practice which had led to the origin of the great feudatories and the accumulation of power

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* A tribute to the virtues of Kwo Tsey, Prince of Fenyang, is included in the inscription on the stone found at Singan in A.D. 1625, which has been already referred to. It is said of him that he employed a Nestorian in the government service, and was generally favourable to Christianity. This monument bears date the year of his death.—Mailla, vol. vi. p. 319.

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in their hands, a state of things which had repeatedly broken up the Empire during the earlier dynasties. As it happened, no case of any importance had arisen during the second Taitsong's life to show whether he meant to carry out his promises or not. The penalty of the weak act was reserved for his son and successor. Tetsong refused to ratify this arrangement, and when a case arose for his sanction he declined to make any concession, and nominated another official to the vacant post. The governors, greatly disappointed in the hopes they had entertained, leagued together, and determined to seize by force the supreme power to which they aspired. Their successes at first surpassed their utmost hopes. The forces of the government were driven from the field, the Emperor had to abandon the capital, and seventy princes of the Tang family were executed to show with what object these subjects had appeared in arms. Chutse, the principal of the insurgent chiefs, took all the steps he considered necessary to place himself on the throne, and assumed all the pomp of royalty. But while he was engaged in the pleasant occupation of regulating the affairs of his own palace, the people were rallying to the side of Tetsong. A proclamation, containing at once a confession of faults and a promise of better government in the future, had been issued in his name, and all those who had taken up arms against their sovereign were promised pardon and forgiveness. It was not without a touch of dignity that Tetsong excepted from the royal clemency Chutse, the principal of all his foes, as the man who had murdered so many

of his family, and who had desecrated the temples of his ancestors.

The effect of this proclamation was so great that Chutse found himself deserted by the bulk of his supporters, and although he showed valour in the field he was compelled to seek safety by flight in the direction of Tibet. On the approach of a body of cavalry sent in pursuit, his officers slew him and sent his head as a peace-offering to the Emperor. Tetsong evinced fresh wisdom in again issuing a general amnesty, and the rebels returned to their homes. Several victories obtained over the Tibetans in A.D. 791–2 added to the returning sense of security, and ten years later this success was repeated against the same foe.*

A great many civil wars, and frequent disasters received at the hands of foreign foes, had marked the history of the Tangs for a long period. The benefits originally conferred by its earlier princes were beginning to be lost sight of, and the later rulers seemed to have forgotten the greatness of the mission with which they were entrusted. There could not be much doubt that the continuance of this state of things would be followed by the collapse of the dynasty. Well might the contemporaries of Tetsong declare that the glory of the Tangs had departed, and that it was only a question of a few years when the unworthy descendants of the great Taitsong should take their departure from the scene of history. Already had the

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* The straits to which the Exchequer was reduced may be inferred from the circumstance that a tax was first placed on tea during this reign. This act entailed a great deal of unpopularity.

eunuchs appeared in the palace influencing the hand which guided the bark of state, and flooding the public service with their nominees; and with their advent to power the days of the existing administration were numbered. Corruption in the service, distrust and rivalry in the cabinet and at the council board, were not less fatal to the well-being of the state than the timidity in action and irresolution in thought which characterised the acts of these beings, who possessed all the greed of power and of wealth without the capacity of turning them to their legitimate and honourable uses. In the year A.D. 800 Tetsong proclaimed that there were no longer any openly declared rebels, and that the country was pacified; but the canker was eating at the core, for the eunuchs made all state appointments, even to the generals in the field and the governors in the provinces.

Tetsong died in the year A.D. 805, and his son Chuntsong succeeded him. Of this young prince the most favourable prognostications were made, but his ill-health and an incurable disease rendered his tenure of the throne of the shortest duration. He abdicated the same year as that of his accession to power.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DECLINE OF THE TANGS.

Hientsong.—The Army.—Weikiao.—Lieoupi's Rising.—"A Mere Man of Letters."—Lissetao.—Siege of Yenchow.—The Eunuchs.—Poisoned.—Moutsong.—His Want of Feeling.—Breaches of Etiquette.—Tibet.—A "Sworn Peace."—Kingtsong.—Murdered.—Wentsong.—Edicts against Eunuchs.—Plot against them.—Foiled.—Executions.—Voutsong.—The Kiei Kiasse.—Edicts against the Bonzes.—The Population.—Suentsong.—Power of the Eunuchs.—Good Memory.—The Wine of Immortality.—Ytsong.—His Faults.—Risings.—Prince of Yunnan.—Casts off Authority of Chinese.—Tonquin. Successes of Haopien.—Loss of Yunnan.—Buddhism.—Hitsong.—Revolt of Hwang Chao.—His Success.—Likeyong.—"The Black Crows."—Trouble.—State of China.—Chaotsong.—"Ruin of Tangs not far distant."—Likeyong's Rising.—Restores Emperor's Authority.—Prince of Tsin.—The Eunuchs.—Imprisonment of Chaotsong.—Released.—Edicts against Eunuchs.—Chuwen.—His Career.—Ambition.—Persecutes Eunuchs.—Singan to Loyang.—Murder of Emperor.—Chao Siuenti.—The Coming Man.—Massacres.—Likeyong takes the Field.—Chuwen's Reverses.—Dirge of Tangs.—Prospect before Chuwen.—Abdication of Chao Siuenti.—Chuwen Emperor.—A Brother's Remonstrance.—Extinction of Tangs.—Retrospect.

It must not be supposed that, because the decline of the Tangs is dated from the accession of Hientsong, the son and successor of Chuntsong, he was in any

degree worse than the princes who had immediately preceded him. The fact is that when he came to the throne the shortcomings of the race were commencing to bear fruit in a general complication of difficulties, and the public mind was beginning to grasp the notion that it might be necessary to replace the Tangs with another line of rulers. The reign of Hientsong offers, therefore, an appropriate starting point in the description of the rapid decline and fall of the great family which had united China and restored its ancient splendour.

The state of the administration had been reduced to such a low pass by the irregularities of the eunuchs that the new Emperor found himself compelled to adopt a more circumspect line of conduct than was either politic or in accordance with his own wishes. The one element of strength in his government consisted in the attention which his chief general Weikiao paid to the interests of the army. The pay and the pensions to the widows and children of those who had fallen in the service of the country were always forthcoming, no matter to what straits the exchequer might be reduced ; and this prudent conduct ensured a stability to the Emperor's authority far in excess of its actual hold on either the affection or the respect of the people. The very first year of his reign witnessed an opportunity for showing how invaluable still was the possession of the strongest military force in the country. Lieoupi, a refractory governor in the province of Szchuen, had exceeded the limits of the license necessarily accorded to the viceroys during a

period when the Emperor felt very uncertain about the security of his own position. At first Hientsong had striven to keep him within the bounds of good humour by overlooking certain acts in his conduct which he might fairly have condemned, but the condescension of the Emperor only increased the arrogance of the rebellious subject. An army was then sent into Szchuen, and Lieoupi's ambition was summarily cut short. The wisdom of the general sent against him produced a great impression in that province, which again became firmly attached to the Empire.*

Several insurrections on a small scale occurred to attract the attention and excite the anxiety of the government, but none of these, with the exception of that of Lissetao, were of sufficient importance to call for comment. This chief set up the standard of revolt in Chantung, where he maintained the semblance of independent authority for some time. Against him in due time an army was sent, and such was its reputation that Lissetao's followers refused to oppose it. Lissetao was taken from his palace to the public square where he and his two sons were executed as rebels. Successful over the domestic enemy the Imperialists were not less fortunate against the foreign foes they

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* It is remarkable that one of the strongest reasons brought forward in favour of proceeding to extremities with Lieoupi at the Imperial Council was that nothing was to be feared in war from him, "as he was a mere man of letters." This shows that the best traditions in China are not all in favour of "the book-worm" and "competitive candidate" being the best commander, as is too generally supposed.

had to encounter in the Tibetans. The successful defence of the city of Yenchow against a numerous host of those persistent enemies of the Chinese is celebrated in the annals of the period, and their withdrawal, after a relieving force had made a demonstration on their line of retreat, crowned the results of the campaign.

Hientsong* may be considered to have been a well-meaning prince of moderate abilities. His partiality for Buddhism was his predominant fault, and in the eunuchs he was too much disposed to see an injured caste. These latter obtained a strong hold over his conduct, and although often warned against these insidious advisers he never profited by the remonstrances frequently addressed to him. On several occasions he even interfered to protect them. Hientsong was also addicted to the superstitious practices then in vogue, and believed in the possibility of extending life to an exceptional degree by drinking the elixirs prepared by the quack doctors of the age. On one occasion he suffered from having taken an overdose of the "wine of immortality," and in his exasperation he ordered many of the eunuchs to be executed. He spared a sufficient number, however, to leave avengers for their slaughtered comrades, and, persisting in his potations of the elixir, he found the only immortality in the poison which had been introduced into his draught

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* During his reign Kiatan compiled his celebrated map of China and its dependent states. For a description of this remarkable specimen of ancient cartography see Gaubil's "Tang History," and Pauthier's "La Chine," p. 324.

by the eunuch Chin Hongtsi. This event took place in A.D. 820, when Hientsong had occupied the throne during fifteen years.

His son Moutsong succeeded him, but his indifference to the duties of his post was not concealed from the first day of his assumption of power. The neglect which he showed in taking steps for the detection and punishment of his father's murderers augured ill for the character of his reign; and his heedless manner, when remonstrated with, created a still more unfavourable impression. The etiquette of the court ordained that, for a deceased ruler, there should be mourning during three years, a regulation which was no doubt only religiously carried out in the case of some prince who had peculiarly distinguished himself. But within a few weeks of his father's murder Moutsong gave a fête on a large scale—an outrage on the ordinary decencies of life. His subjects could without difficulty infer from this conduct the character of their new ruler, and his later acts did not cause them to change their original opinion.

The only event of any importance of the reign was the conclusion of a "sworn peace" with Tibet in the year A.D. 821. The Sanpou of that day sent a special envoy to Singan to propose that by each country "weapons shall be put by." A treaty of peace was concluded on this basis, and proclaimed with every formality, and although small incursions continued to take place, now on one side, now on the other, for some years afterwards, the long struggle between the Tibetans and the Chinese then virtually

reached its close. There was a feeling of respect on both sides; and when the intercourse was resumed at a later period the government of Tibet remembered only the ties which bound it to China, and not the long and sanguinary wars of these two centuries. In itself this was an event of sufficient importance to redeem Moutsong's memory from complete forgetfulness.

Moutsong was another believer in the virtues of the elixir of immortality, and in A.D. 824 he also paid the penalty of his credulity with his life.

His son Kingtsong, the next Emperor, was the exact counterpart of his father. Equally indifferent and good tempered he followed his own inclinations, and treated all the remonstrances* of his ministers with the lenience of one too well satisfied with himself to be angry. His occupation of the throne was of only two years' duration, and when he absented himself from his council he lost the support of the thoughtful among his ministers. He also incurred the hostility of the eunuchs, who murdered him after a debauch. These attempted to set up a ruler of their own choice, but they failed in their attempt. They had to accept Kingtsong's brother Prince Lihan, who

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* His ministers thought to bring him back to a sense of duty by presenting him with a very handsome screen of six wings, on each of which moral precepts peculiarly applicable to himself were inscribed. He is reported to have examined the gift with great care, to have read the sentences with attention, and to have observed that it was a very pretty ornament. He neither profited by the advice nor expressed any indignation at its being given. He was supremely indifferent to everything.

was proclaimed his successor, and began his reign in A.D. 826 under the style of Wentsong.

Wentsong proved himself to be a man of considerable force of character. He owed his elevation to the support of the eunuchs, but he regarded them personally with ill-concealed aversion. It became the object of his life to shake off the authority which they claimed over him, and to drive them from the powerful position which they had quietly appropriated. He carried out several beneficent reforms, and his attention to public business was praiseworthy; but his whole energy was devoted to the struggle with the eunuchs. Not safe in the precincts of his own palace he had to dissimulate his aversion to them, and his ministers were unfortunately destitute of the resolution required to grapple with and dispel, once and for all, the danger to the welfare of the state. The officials in the country were more zealous than those in the town, and had less hesitation in naming the national enemies; but then they were remote from the scene, and were spectators rather than actors in the crisis. In A.D. 829 an edict was passed compelling the eunuchs to confine themselves to the palace and its surroundings, but this they viewed with indifference, as it was restricting them to the sphere of their ordinary duties.

Six years after the passing of this regulation Wentsong entered into a plot with several of the principal of his ministers for the getting rid of the eunuchs. There were many who wished to have the credit of performing this patriotic work, and there were others

glad to do the bidding of their prince. The secret was well kept, and up to the last the eunuchs had no idea of the impending danger. At the critical moment, however, the leaders lost their nerve, and the eunuchs hastily collecting their followers made good their position against their assailants. They had lost ten or twelve of their number, but it was now their turn to strike, and their blow went home. Sixteen hundred mandarins and one thousand of their supporters among the people fell in one day before the vengeance of these infuriated persons. Not content with slaughtering their opponents they executed their relations in order to appease their revengeful instincts. Discouraged by the failure of his scheme, and unable to renew the attempt Wentsong became a mere puppet in their hands. His later years were rendered miserable by the remembrance of this overthrow, and it was a happy release when, broken down in health, his life closed in A.D. 840, after a reign of fourteen years. He had measured himself against the power of the eunuchs and he had been ignominiously beaten. After so severe a defeat, morally and physically, he had no alternative but to die.

Wentsong wished that one of his sons should succeed him, and, perhaps for no other reason than that he wished it, the eunuchs would accept neither. They chose Wentsong's brother, who took the name of Voutsong. Voutsong showed no scruple in forcing his way into power, like another Richard, by the murder of his nephews; but having made good his position he evinced qualities that went far towards

redeeming his character in the eyes of his people. He protected the frontiers in a manner that they had not seen for some generations, and he granted a tribe* from Western Asia sanctuary within his dominions. In the province of Shensi his lieutenants gained several successes over a turbulent tribe named Tang-hiang; and Voutsong must be allowed to have been, on the whole, an able and vigorous ruler. He was a great huntsman and much given to military exercises. The measures he sanctioned against the Buddhist priests are commendable, not because they were directed against the representatives of a strange religion, but because they aimed a blow at the drones of society. A bonze was an able-bodied man living a life of idleness, and often one also of immorality, on the credulity of his fellow-men, and it required neither peculiar merit in the creed nor any specially persuasive power in the arguments of its ministers to induce thousands of individuals to seek the retirement and the temporal enjoyments of a Buddhist monastery. It was but the inevitable consequence of this abuse that the government should pass edicts against it, and Voutsong, in A.D. 845, ordered the bonzes and the female devotees to quit their religious houses and return to their families.

Voutsong died the year following this remarkable

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* The Kiei Kiasse, from the neighbourhood of modern Ili. These represented themselves as the descendants of Li Kwangli and Liling, the Chinese generals of the first century B.C. (see pp. 131–2). They and the Chato, a kindred clan, were probably the ancestors of the Tungani.

event, leaving behind him the deserved regret that his reign had been of too brief duration.*

Again did the eunuchs figure in the character of king-makers. It was their nominee, Suentsong, a grandson of Hientsong, that was proclaimed Emperor, and they selected him because he had always had the reputation of being half-witted. No sooner was he proclaimed than a remarkable change was observed in his character. Far from being a mere tool in the hands of the eunuchs, he showed a hostile disposition towards them, and on this point shared the opinions of his predecessor. His schemes for their punishment fell through, and he, like several of his predecessors, passed his last days in constant apprehension for his personal safety within the walls of his palace. During his reign the Kiei Kiasse did good service against the Hiuho, and the internal affairs of Tibet were in so distracted a state that the frontiers of Shensi and Szchuen remained undisturbed. The writers of the time record that Suentsong possessed that royal gift, a good memory for faces, which once seen were never forgotten. He also was unfortunately disposed to believe in the possibility of prolonging man's allotted term, and, in A.D. 859, his life was given as another sacrifice on the part of Chinese Emperors to this self-deluding superstition.†

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* Strange to say, the population declined during his reign. It may be put approximately at thirty millions. It must be remembered that it was a sadly reduced Empire.

† A minister told him that the best way to attain long life was "to make himself master of his own heart, to repress his passions, and to practice virtue."—Du Halde, t. i. p. 408.

To the pride, extravagance, and superstition of the next Emperor, Ytsong, Suentsong's son, must in a great degree be attributed the confusion which fell more heavily upon the realm. In the first year of his reign a rising, headed by a discontented official, broke out in Chekiang. The local garrisons were defeated, and it required a great effort and the despatch of a large army from the capital to repress the insurrection. The rebel was taken prisoner and executed, but even this fate failed to deter others from copying his example. There was a restless spirit abroad that would not be allayed.

Ytsong's success was due as much to the insignificance of his opponent as to the efficacy of his measures. When required to face a more formidable antagonist in the Prince of Nanchao or Yunnan the result was not in his favour. In A.D. 861 this potentate, who was not only a Chinese vassal, but at whose court a Chinese officer resided as agent for the Emperor, conceived that a slight had been offered him, and, indignant at the tardy reparation, took up arms and cast off his allegiance. He succeeded beyond the summit of his expectations, plundered Tonquin and most of the surrounding districts, and set up an independent government in Yunnan. Several armies were sent against him, but they were one and all driven back without accomplishing their mission. The barbarians of Yunnan, as they were called, declared themselves free, and the Chinese government, after several abortive attempts to reassert its authority, was too weak to enter upon a protracted struggle

with the rebels. At one time it looked as if the Prince of Yunnan would have succeeded in adding Tonquin to his own state, and such might have proved the case but for the victories won in A.D. 866 by Ytsong's lieutenant, Kaopien, one of the most skilful generals of the age. The severance of Yunnan from the rest of the Empire was, however, complete and not to be disputed.

Ytsong was a fervent believer in Buddhism, in support of which he wrote treatises, and he granted large subsidies to the priests of that religion. In A.D. 872 he sent emissaries to India to obtain a bone of Buddha's body, and when remonstrated with he said he should die happy when he had procured his wish. On the return of the embassy with the object of its quest, he received it, surrounded by his court, on his knees. A general pardon and a week's festivities testified to the sincerity of the Emperor's feelings. Unfortunately they were feelings that should have been repressed, not indulged. Only a few weeks after this event, when he had held the sceptre for fourteen years, Ytsong died suddenly.* His extravagance had greatly contributed to the aggravation of the evils from which the people had so long been suffering. His son, a boy of twelve years, succeeded him, taking the name of Hitsong.

It was particularly unfortunate that, at a time when the need both of the country and of the dynasty was

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* He was thirty-one years of age. The story is told of him that he caused twenty doctors to be killed one after the other because they failed to save the life of a favourite daughter.

the sorest, the governing power should rest in the hands of a boy. Hitsong gave himself up to the amusements of youth, and paid slight heed to the landscape darkening on every hand. His reign of fifteen years proved a succession of revolts, intrigues, and their usual termination in wholesale massacres and executions, over which, in a distracted country, there presided the mockery of a justice which was no longer pure or impartial.

Among the principal revolts was that in the southern portion of the country, headed by Hwang Chao, who won over a party by "his liberalities,"* and speedily made himself formidable to the Emperor by the capture of the important city of Canton. This success was followed by others. The principal cities of Houkwang and Kiangsi surrendered to him, and Loyang and Singan—the two court residences—shared the same fate. The Emperor was compelled to seek safety in flight, and all the members of the Imperial family who were captured were executed. Having rapidly attained the summit of his ambition, Hwang Chao's fortunes as rapidly declined.

In this desperate situation, Hitsong found an unexpected friend and champion in Likeyong, the chief of a Turk tribe.† Two years after Hwang Chao had

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* See for an interesting account of this rising the "Narrative of Two Mahomedan Travellers in China in the Ninth Century," translated by Eusebius Renaudot: London, 1733. Hwang Chao is called Baichu in this work. The consequence of this rebellion was that the Arab merchants who came periodically from Shiraf desisted from coming, and the trade languished and died out.

† The Chato immigrants.

established himself at Singan, and proclaimed a new dynasty, Likeyong, assembling a small but chosen army of his own Chato people, marched to the deliverance of his master. Forty thousand men followed his banner, all dressed in a black uniform, and these troops became known to the rebels as "the black crows." It became a common expression, "Unhappy are those who happen to fall under their talons."* With these troops he defeated Hwang Chao, and wrested from him his recent conquests. The rebel fled into Honan, but Likeyong pressed him hard. In A.D. 884 he completely defeated him, and the success of the campaign was finally crowned by the death of Hwang Chao, who was murdered by one of his own followers. Hitsong was restored to his throne to enjoy four more years of nominal authority, but dissensions and strife remained around him on all sides. Likeyong himself had to take up the sword on one occasion against those who pretended to speak in the Emperor's name; but he appears to have been the only man actuated by unselfish motives. Even when in arms he deprecated the insinuation that he was opposing the legitimate authority of his sovereign. In the midst of these scenes of confusion, Hitsong's death occurred (A.D. 888).

The picture drawn of China at this period is a very distressing one. The country desolate, the towns ruined, the capital reduced to ashes.† Not a province

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* Mailla, vol. vi. p. 558.

† There was no palace for the Emperor. A house had to be built for him.

that had not been visited by the horrors of a civil war, not a fortified place which had not undergone a siege, and which might be esteemed fortunate if it had escaped a sack. With confusion in the administration, and the absence of all public spirit, it was not surprising that each governor should strive to make himself independent, and to fight for his own hand. There was little in such a spectacle as this to awaken joy in the heart of the heir of the Tangs.

Chaotsong, brother of Hitsong, succeeded as the nineteenth Emperor of his family, and he was not wanting in good parts. Indeed, if he had appeared earlier in the struggle, there is no saying but that his energy and courage might have restored the fortune of his House. He had however come too late, when no human power could have availed to have turned the bark of state from the course on which it was steadily bent. His accession marked the beginning of the end, and, as Likeyong truly said, "the ruin of the Tangs was not far distant." In view of the widespread disorganisation of society, even the crimes of the eunuchs had ceased to attract the old attention. When the nation was split up into numerous hostile camps, it became a point of secondary importance whether an impotent Emperor permitted his proclamations to be dictated by his duly appointed ministers or by a cabal of intriguers within the walls of his palace. It mattered little one way or the other, for the whole proceeding was a farce, destitute of practical importance.

In A.D. 890 Likeyong appeared in arms, and issued a proclamation, announcing his intention to visit the

Emperor and throw himself at his feet. His loyalty did not interfere with the measures he adopted against Chaotsong's representatives, whom he defeated with heavy loss when they sought to bar his way to the capital. He had taken up arms, he declared, for the removal of bad advisers. Chaotsong accepted his assurances of friendship, re-appointed him to his former offices, but forbade him to come to the capital. He was one of those friends whom princes prefer to see at a distance, and as a subject he was too powerful to be an object of affection. Five years later, Likeyong again took the field, this time in support of the Emperor against three rebellious governors. His old success attended his operations. Chaotsong returned to Singan, whence he had fled, and Likeyong proposed a scheme for chastising all rebels throughout the country. But Chaotsong was satisfied with the result attained, and thoroughly distrusted the integrity of the man who had thus for a second time preserved the Empire. Likeyong* was created Prince of Tsin, and requested to return to his government.

Chaotsong did not long preserve the decorous attitude which had marked his first days of power. His excesses roused a feeling of hostility towards himself that had hitherto been absent, and these reached their climax when, in an ebullition of temper, he slew several of his guard and of the ladies of the palace. This outrage, although committed by the

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* He sent his son Litsunhiu to see the Emperor, who, struck with the expression of his countenance, said, "Remember, when you are of an age to serve, to be always faithful to my family."

Emperor, led to the forming of a plot against his person by the eunuchs, who resolved to depose a ruler who was in constant opposition to their views. The plot was carried out with great daring and success. The Emperor, the Empress, and the principal members of their suite, were confined in an inner apartment of the palace, where they were strictly guarded. Chaotsong's infant son was proclaimed in his stead, and the eunuch Lieou Kichou wielded the authority and dispensed the favours of the new government. This act of audacity was more than even the ministers and officers of a decaying dynasty would tolerate, and the eunuchs, afraid to get rid of the Emperor, were very soon in their turn overpowered and compelled to release their prisoner. Chaotsong's return to power was followed by the passing of severe edicts against the eunuchs, who were deprived of all their administrative functions. At the very moment therefore when they thought they held final success in their grasp, the eunuchs were nearest their fall. From this point they lost their importance as a factor in the crisis which endured from the fall of the Tangs until the rise of the great Sung dynasty.

When Likeyong retired into his government in Shensi, he left the field clear for Chuwen, an ambitious general who had played a prominent part in all the disturbances since the rising of Hwang Chao. Originally a lieutenant of that able but unscrupulous leader, he had abandoned him to throw in his fortunes with those of the Emperor Hitsong as soon as he discovered that his success was not likely to prove more

than transient. A keen rivalry had existed from the first between this personage and Likeyong, in whom Chuwen saw the principal obstacle to his attaining the supreme power which he coveted. On Likeyong's retreat, after effecting the relief of the Emperor, Chuwen commenced his preparations for the final step on which he was resolved. Filling all the principal offices with his own creatures, he courted popularity, at the same time that he removed possible rivals by persecuting the eunuchs, whose extermination he ordered and carried out with such severity that "only thirty old men and children" were spared. Soon after this event Chuwen was created Prince of Leang.

In A.D. 904 Chuwen compelled Chaotsong to leave Singan and take up his residence at Loyang, where he felt more secure and better able to attain the objects he had in view. In view of his growing power Likeyong himself lost courage, and feared that his intervention would only provoke a greater catastrophe. Chaotsong entreated his former deliverer and other Chinese governors to come to his assistance; but none ventured to stir in his behalf. This unhappy prince endeavoured also to free himself from the chains in which his tyrant had placed him, by offering him a poisoned drink, but Chuwen was too wary to be thus entrapped. When Chaotsong reached Loyang his doom was sealed. Treated with the outward form of respect, he was without power, and in the hands of a man who regarded him as an obstacle in the path of his ambition. For a few months he was suffered to

live, and then he was brutally murdered by order of Chuwen. The excuse put forward was that some mutinous soldiers committed this act; but, if Chuwen wished the tale to obtain credence, he took a very bad way—although he executed his own son as the murderer—to effect his object. He invited all the princes of the Tang family that were at Loyang to a grand banquet—held on the borders of a lake—and when he had feasted them a body of soldiers appeared upon the scene and threw all the guests into the water. Nor did his barbarity cease with this act. Because "there is no peace for the wicked,"* he deposed all the officials, and executed many of them, distrusting their fidelity, although they were nearly all of his own creation. He persecuted after a similar fashion the highest officers in the state, and on the advice of a minister, who told him that if any serious danger could come to him from any class it would be from them, he caused them to be condemned and led in chains to the banks of the Hoangho, where they were drowned. Such acts as these show in the clearest light the probability of Chuwen's guilt in the case of Chaotsong's murder.

Chuwen put Chao Siuenti, one of the youngest sons of the deceased Emperor, on the throne; but he, seeing that he must prove another victim to his unscrupulous ambition, resigned the hollow office after a nominal reign of two years' duration. During that brief period he was not responsible for the acts com-

* Mailla, vol. vii. p. 101.

mitted in his name. Chuwen's sole fear arose from the power of Likeyong, who was holding an observant attitude within his own dominions; but in A.D. 906 that chief, on the recommendation of his son, placed an army in the field, and wrested the town of Loochow from him. Chuwen alarmed at this reverse returned to Loyang, where the closing events in the drama of the fortunes of the Tang family obscure, for the moment, the interest in the struggle between the two great rivals, Chuwen and Likeyong the Turk.

It was after this campaign that Chao Siuenti resigned the insignia of power to Chuwen.* The transfer of authority was effected with all necessary ceremony. Chuwen accepted the will of the people, and Chao Siuenti recognised the force of circumstances and the decree of fate. The change came at a critical moment, for there were clouds on the horizon for the new ruler to dispel if he could. In the north-west there were defeats to avenge and retrieve, and in the interior much discontent and little confidence prevailed. Chuwen was accepting a great responsibility, and it was doubtful whether he possessed the

* The dirge of the Tang dynasty may be considered to have been made in the following petition to Chuwen: "There is no longer doubt that the dynasty of the Tangs has fallen to the ground. It is no longer anything but a name, and the wishes of Heaven have undergone a change in its respect. In the uncertainty which prevails as to the person on whom its choice will be fixed, a great number of persons raise troops and say that it is for the purpose of restoring the Tangs; but in sooth it is because they are still ignorant in favour of whom they ought to declare themselves. To put an end to their doubts and vain hopes it is necessary, prince, that you should mount the throne and take the glorious title of Hoangti, of which your great actions have rendered you worthy."—Mailla, vol. vii. p. 112.

strength necessary to meet it. His own attached followers saw no reason to confide in his friendship, and they did not support him with the staunch and implicit trust of those who know that the victory of the leader will be not more in proportion than the triumph of the men who follow and who make his fortune. Chuwen founded a dynasty, and took the great names of Taitsou Hoangti; but in the very birth of the new power there were perceptible the seeds of an early decay.*

Chao Siuenti did not long survive his abdication. It was no part of Chuwen's programme that he should remain a standing danger to his administration, and in the year following his proclamation he caused him to be assassinated. Thus closed, with the extinction of the race, the career of the illustrious family of the Tangs. It had given twenty Emperors to China during a period of nearly three centuries,† and some of these conferred benefits upon the country which

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* Chutsiuenyu, Chuwen's eldest brother, addressed him as follows on the occasion of his mounting the throne: "Chusan (his former name), formerly you were nothing more than a simple individual of Tangchau in our country of Kiangnan, when a love of libertinage impelled you to follow the rebel Hwang Chao. Our Emperor had the clemency to spare your life, and out of his excessive bounty gave you a command in his army. Piling fresh benefits every day upon your head, he raised you to be governor of four great provinces. Had you any reason to believe that you could ever attain to so high a degree of good fortune? Whence comes it then that, by an unheard-of ingratitude, you dare to extinguish the august family of the Tangs, which has governed us for nearly three hundred years? Have you no fear that ours may not suffer the same fate? Your chastisement is nearer, perhaps, than you think."—Mailla, vol. vii. p. 115.

† Two hundred and eighty-nine years.

endured long beyond the fall of their family. In the great Taitsong* it may boast the greatest ruler, taken all in all, that ever guided the destinies of the Chinese race; and whether we consider the extent of the mission with which it was entrusted, or the manner in which its duties were performed, we can only hesitate before comparing any other reigning House with it. In Chinese history the part played by the Tangs is unique, unless the present reigning dynasty should equal or eclipse it; and, although their fall clearly shows how much the descendants of Kaotsou and Taitsong had forgotten the art of government, the record of their prowess, of their conquests, and of the benefits of their domestic administration yet remains to excite our wonder and admiration. From Cochin China to Tokharistan, from Corea to the Persian frontier, there was not a people or a state which did not regard the Empire of the Tangs as the great military and civilised Power of Asia. India did not escape the influence of the spell, and the impetuous Arabs abstained from insulting the borders of a potentate whom they could not but respect. The tradition of China's power and wealth remained, but the richest legacy left by the earlier Tangs to those who occupied their seat in after times was that no ruler can be held to be great who is not just, and that, although his first

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* We reluctantly give him precedence over Keen Lung, the fourth of the Manchu rulers, who must, in our opinion, be placed next. Tsin Hoangti, Han Vouti, Kublai Khan, Ming Taitsou or Hongwou, and Kanghi are all worthy of a place immediately following, but close to, these two Emperors.

duty is to his own people, his justice is imperfect if it does not also include other peoples and nations besides his own. Taitsong saw and acted upon this truth, thus making it the brightest wreath in the laurels of the Tangs.

CHAPTER XVI.

FIVE SMALL DYNASTIES.

*The Later Leangs, Tangs, Tsins, Hans, and Chows.**

Leang Taitsou.—Rivalry of Governors.—Likeyong.—Litsunhiu.—Yeliu Apaoki.—The Khitans.—Taitsou Declares War.—Siege of Loochow.—Death of Likeyong.—His Successor.—Relief of Loochow and great defeat of Leangs.—Victory on the Yeho.—Murder of Taitsou.—Moti.—Yen.—Fabian Tactics.—Liusiun.—A Fighting Council of War.—Severe Defeat.—Apaoki Again-—Hoangho Frozen.—Battle of Houlieoupi.—Victories.—Death of Moti.—Chwangtsong.—A New Dynasty. Subjugation of Szchuen.—A Splendid Barbarian.—Discontent in his Army.—Attacked in his Palace.—Brave Fight at the Gate.—Death of Litsunhiu.—Lisseyuen.—Mingtsong—Art of Printing Discovered.—Releases Prisoners of War.—His Death.—Mingti.—Litsongkou.—Lou Wang.—Another Dynasty.—Cheking Tang.—A Soldier of Fortune.—The Khitan Despotism.—Emperor a Tartar Vassal.—Father Emperor.—A Struggle Inevitable.—Tsi Wang.—Tekwang invades Empire.—Defeated.—But Returns.—Corea.—Tekwang's Success.—Deposition of Tsi Wang.—Lieouchi Yuen.—Another Dynasty.—Ynti.—A Self-indulgent Prince.—Kwo Wei.—The Last of the Small Dynasties.—Mahomedans.—Chitsong.—The Promise of Greatness.—His Early Death.—Kongti.—Chow Kwang Yu.—The Dawn of a New Era.—The Future.

It very soon became evident that Taitsou had accepted a task for which he did not possess the necessary

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* This period is the least satisfactory and interesting in the whole length of Chinese history, and calls for only brief description. These five dynasties of thirteen Emperors occupied a space of time of less than one cycle (sixty years).

strength. His authority was not recognised outside a portion of Chantung and the whole of Honan, while his assumption of the Imperial title had made him the object of the hatred of all the other governors, who regarded him as the person who had defrauded them of their lawful right. Several went so far as to call themselves Emperors, and to adopt the ceremony held by custom to accompany that high dignity; but the greatest danger was threatened by Likeyong, who did nothing. His policy was to wait upon the course of events, and not to strike until he saw where the blow might be best delivered. The impetuosity of his son Litsunhiu urged him to break this prudent resolve, and to adopt the advice that it would be better to strike before Taitsou could consolidate his position.

An alliance between Likeyong and Yeliu Apaoki, a powerful Tartar chieftain in Southern Mongolia, who had subdued many tribes and a large tract of country, threatened Taitsou with a danger which might have proved fatal. Fortunately for him, Yeliu Apaoki, although the first to propose it, was not sincere in his engagement with the Prince of Tsin, and made counter proposals to Taitsou. This double-dealing saved the new Emperor from a grave peril, while it enabled the Khitan Apaoki to consolidate his own power, and some years later to assert his supremacy in the Empire. Encouraged by this diplomatic victory, Taitsou came to the conclusion that his best plan would be to declare war upon the Prince of Tsin without giving him the time and opportunity for forming any fresh alliances. He despatched a force, therefore, to lay

siege to the town of Loochow, taken from him only a few years before. This place was gallantly and, in the end, successfully defended against him; but the most interesting event of the year was the death of Likeyong. Litsunhiu, the boy who had attracted the notice of Chaotsong, was recognised as his successor, and the struggle for power was resumed with greater vigour and determination than ever.

Litsunhiu resolved to give lustre to his name by effecting the relief of Loochow, being, as he said, not without a hope that Taitsou might relax some of his attention to the war in consequence of Likeyong's death. This belief proved well founded, and Litsunhiu effected the relief of this city by winning a brilliant victory over the Imperialist army besieging it. On receiving the disastrous news, Taitsou exclaimed, "Likeyong is not dead; he lives again in his son." The war continued during the remaining years of Taitsou's life. In A.D. 911 Litsunhiu won another battle on the banks of the Yeho, when he captured the enemy's camp, and a large quantity of his baggage.

This crushing blow produced an effect upon the mind of Taitsou from which he never recovered, and the bitterness of defeat was intensified by the knowledge that he had no one to fight his battles save himself, or to carry on the work which he had barely commenced. On several occasions he showed the old distrust of his most intimate and confidential advisers, few as they were; and to the end he remained isolated and apart from both the desires of

the people and the ambitious objects of his own followers. His death was brought about by other causes than those of war and turmoil. His eldest son, whom he had provoked, slew him in a moment of passion, thus cutting short a career which had throughout its whole length been one of confusion and restlessness. The parricide did not long enjoy the fruits of his crime, for a brother, constituting himself the avenger of his sire, attacked and slew him in turn. Having accomplished this act of stern justice, he ascended the throne as the Emperor Moti.

Meanwhile Litsunhiu was pushing his advantages in the north-west. He had turned aside in his career against the Leangs to attack the Prince of Yen, who, after a feeble resistance, was made prisoner, and executed because he had refused to accept the terms* previously offered him. Having protected his flank by this movement, Litsunhiu resumed his operations against the Emperor. Moti put fresh armies in the field, and endeavoured to defend his dominions against the invader. His army was, however, ill able to engage in a serious struggle with the well-trained and hardy troops of the Prince of Tsin; and his general, Liu-siun, recognising this fact, wished to avoid a pitched battle. Moti disapproved of his tactics, and sent him an imperative order to engage the enemy without

* Litsunhiu, when laying siege to his chief city, had an interview with him on the walls. He had promised him honourable terms, and in token of his good intentions had broken his bow. The Prince of Yen wished to accept his offer, but was dissuaded by a false friend and adviser.

further delay, anxious, perhaps, that the agony of suspense as to his fate should be speedily removed.

Liusiun's better judgment urged him to continue his Fabian tactics, but his council of war was unanimous in favour of decisive action. The result proved the accuracy of his views, for he was beaten with heavy loss in a pitched battle, by one of Litsunhiu's lieutenants. This battle was fought in the year A.D. 916, and it would have decided the contest had not Yeliu Apaoki, the Khitan king, entered the dominions of the Prince of Tsin at the head of a large army. He defeated Litsunhiu's generals in several encounters, and captured some of his strongest cities; but before the close of this campaign the Tartar was compelled to retreat into his own territory. Litsunhiu, whose attention was momentarily distracted by this incursion, again turned all his strength against Moti.

The winter of the year A.D. 917 was exceptionally severe, and the Hoangho was frozen over in sufficient strength to admit of the passage of an army. The Prince of Tsin crossed it without accident at the head of his infantry and cavalry, and carried by storm the small forts held by the Emperor in this quarter. In the following year he collected the largest army that had yet followed his banner, and proclaimed his intention of seizing the Empire. Moti made strenuous preparations for defending his throne, and placed a large army in the field. But fortune was against him, and not to be propitiated. On the field of Houlieoupi, where twenty thousand of his best troops were slain,

his army was routed mainly by the superior skill of Litsunhiu, who, losing his best general early in the day, headed his men in person. In a second battle he followed up this success, when the result was not less favourable to his side. Making sure of the passage of the Hoangho by the construction of two forts, he advanced towards Moti's capital,* driving the remnants of his beaten army before him, and receiving the surrender and congratulations of those who already saw in him their new ruler. His movements were again delayed for a short space by a fresh incursion on the part of the Khitan ruler; but he did not suffer these diversions to turn him from his main object. In A.D. 923 he laid siege to Moti's capital, and that prince, seeing that his ruin was inevitable, ordered one of his officers to put an end to his existence, thus terminating also the brief reign of the Later Leangs, who had only maintained the position seized by Chuwen for the short space of sixteen years. Some months before this event Litsunhiu had proclaimed a new dynasty, and he had given it the name of the Tang because he declared it to be his ambition to renew the glories of that family. He took the name of Chwangtsong.

Chwangtsong's reign proved of short duration. After overthrowing the Leangs and setting the seal to their ruin by the desecration of their ancestral tombs the new ruler sent an expedition into Szchuen which he subdued. He gratified his martial tastes by

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* Pingchow.

instituting military games and by resorting to a personal display not in accordance with the condition of the state. At the same time he proved to be avaricious, and parted reluctantly with his money for objects of public utility. Chwangtsong proved himself to be rather a splendid barbarian than a wise ruler. His most congenial element was the battlefield, and the camp of armed men. When engaged on any expedition he slept on the bare ground and shared his soldiers' fare; but in his new capital, surrounded by the unknown luxury and wealth of a southern court, his great qualities degenerated like those of Hannibal at Capua. For the stern game of war he preferred the spectacle, for the camp the luxury and pleasant ease of the palace.

If their leader was forgetful of his former prowess, the fierce soldiers who followed his banner did not rest satisfied with what had been achieved. They panted for fresh triumphs, and thought the tranquillity of the life of citizens but a poor exchange for the excitement of the soldier's career. When a return of his old energy came to him his soldiers were disaffected, and several of his rivals were preparing for a fresh outbreak in the struggle for power. It is probable that he would have triumphed over his difficulties even at this late stage, but that a desperate party among his soldiers resolved to precipitate the crisis. It was while he was in his palace at Loyang, whither he had led his army for the purpose of meeting one of his opponents, that the bad feeling among his soldiers broke out in a flame. The news was suddenly brought

to him that a party of conspirators was forcing the gates. Buckling on his armour he placed himself at the head of his immediate attendants, and hastened to defend the entrance, at the same time sending an order for the immediate despatch of his cavalry from outside the town. Its commander refused to obey, and Chwangtsong was left to his fate. No record has been preserved of that stubborn fight at the gate of the palace of Loyang, but we may safely imagine that it was worthy of the earlier reputation of Litsunhiu. Deserted by his oldest officers he fought on with a mere handful of men, checking the rush of the hundreds of his assailants. The result remained doubtful, until an arrow struck the Emperor in the head, when he was carried into the interior of the palace by a faithful follower. The Empress sent him a cup of sour milk, which was no doubt poisoned, as Chwangtsong died immediately after taking it. Chwangtsong was only thirty-five years of age when this event occurred, and there cannot be a difference of opinion that a remarkable career was thus cut short.*

Troubles broke out in several directions, and might have assumed grave proportions but that Lisseyuen, Chwangtsong's adopted brother and best general, took steps to remove them. He executed such of the rebels as he could seize, and banished the Empress, who was more than suspected of having poisoned her husband, and who was discovered in the act of plun-

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* His old adversary, Yeliu Apaoki, the Khitan king, expressed great grief at his death. He himself died the same year, and was succeeded by his son.

dering the palace. But he refused the dignity of Emperor which they wished to confer upon him, and while the troubles continued he styled himself simply Governor of the realm. Having restored some appearance of order he retracted his refusal, and mounted the throne under the title of Mingtsong (A.D 926).

During the ten years of his tenure of power Mingtsong was continually engaged in wars with either domestic or foreign enemies, but he managed to find time for the promotion of science and the encouragement of men of learning. The great art of printing was first discovered and turned to practical use during his reign, more than five centuries before Caxton and the printing presses of Germany.* His principal successes had been obtained over the Khitans who were the most troublesome of neighbours, but their losses were so severe that they were fain to accept the terms accorded them. Mingtsong showed a desire to propitiate them by releasing several of their officers whom he had made prisoners, although he was warned that the knowledge they had acquired in China would be turned against himself. Mingtsong thought the risk on this account preferable to a perpetuation of the hostile feelings between the peoples.

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* The exact date of the first printing press, in which wooden blocks were used, is uncertain; but it was probably about this period that it was first generally employed. The celebrated publication commonly called the "Pekin Gazette" was nearly two centuries older, as it certainly existed in the reign of the enlightened Mingti of the Tangs (A.D. 713–756). Its correct title may be considered as one of the following, "Metropolitan Announcements," "Court Announcements," or "Copies from the Capital." Practically it has always been and is still a Court Circular and Official Gazette combined.

In A.D. 933 he fell dangerously ill, and troubles arose in his own family on the question of the succession. One son absolutely appeared in arms in the palace, and Mingtsong was constrained to order summary steps to be taken for his punishment. Distressed at this act Mingtsong's malady assumed an intensified form, and he died very shortly afterwards, leaving behind him the reputation of a wise and peace-loving prince.

His son Mingti succeeded him, but his brief reign of one year was a series of misfortunes. Litsongkou, Prince of Lou, one of Mingtsong's favourite generals, revolted against him, and drove him from the throne. The Empress declared in favour of this pretender, and, when Mingti had been got rid of, Litsongkou became the Emperor Lou Wang. He did not long enjoy the power he had won by the extinction of the family of Likeyong, for within a year he fell a victim to the ambition of a rival general. Seeing that the end was at hand he retired with his family to a turret in his palace, which he set on fire, thus perishing in the flames. So expired the brief dynasty of the Later Tangs.*

Cheking Tang, such was the name of the new ruler, had taken a prominent part in the troubles of this period. Indeed he had been the first to urge Litsongkou to make his attempt upon the throne, but when that ruler was beset with difficulties he did not scruple to turn them to account for his own pur-

* Du Halde makes several statements not in accordance with other authorities in his summary of this period.

poses. On assuming the purple Cheking Tang changed his name to Kaotsou, and gave his dynasty the title of the Tsin.*

As a matter of fact the power of the new Emperor was little more than a shadow of the despotism of the Khitan king on his northern frontier. That despotism had been steadily growing and extending its limits in the few years that had elapsed since Litsunhiu had warred with Apaoki; and in A.D. 937 Tekwang, the son of the latter ruler, changed the name from Khitan to Leaou. He openly claimed the Emperor as his vassal, and Kaotsou was sufficiently prudent to recognise that his strength was inadequate to the contesting of these pretensions. Kaotsou addressed him as Father Emperor, and sought on all occasions to propitiate a personage of whose superior military power he stood in daily apprehension. Several of the more old fashioned of the ministers, not approving of these condescensions towards a "barbarian" potentate, remonstrated with Kaotsou, but their sense of the slighted dignity of the Empire was ill-suited to the time, and their inconvenient protests were summarily dismissed or passed over. It was also practically observed by one of the ministers that the Khitans or Leaous were no longer a barbarous people. They had appropriated, with a large portion of Chinese territory in Leaoutung, and Pechihli, the civilisation

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* Heou, or after Tsin. Cheking Tang was a soldier of the Chato tribe, who had caught the eye of Lisseyuen, afterwards Emperor Mingtsong, in the wars. Lisseyuen was his patron, and gave him his daughter in marriage. He was essentially a soldier of fortune.

and refinement of Chinese life, at the same time that they retained the hardy characteristics of their Tartar ancestors. A war between this warlike and united people, and the enfeebled strength of the Empire could have but one result. Tekwang felt sure of his superior power. It would have been strange if he had refrained from exercising it.

So long as Kaotsou lived his tact availed to avert an overthrow, and the Khitan king rested content with the profuse professions of goodwill and subservience sent him at frequent intervals by the occupant of the Dragon Throne. Kaotsou had, however, to pay a still heavier price to prevent the invasion of his dominions by this northern people in the surrender of several of his border cities, and the grant of an annual subsidy. He accepted the inevitable with the calmness of a philosopher. His death after a reign of seven years altered the position of affairs, by affording those who had throughout exclaimed against the indignity to the Empire an opportunity of carrying their opinions into acts.

The new ruler was Tsi Wang, Kaotsou's nephew, but during his four years' reign he left no distinct impression on the history of the times. He fell into the hands of ministers who were inclined to dispute the claims of the Khitan king, and their arguments based on the personal disgrace to the Emperor proved palatable to the mind of a new ruler. It was certainly not hard to show the shame of a Chinese monarch being the feudatory of a northern king; but they excluded from their calculations stern

necessity which is generally cloaked in a garb without symmetry to the eye or pleasure to the imagination. Tsi Wang paid his court, with less judgment than his uncle, to Tekwang, who in retaliation resolved to depose the Chinese ruler. His resolve was intensified by a severe defeat* inflicted upon his army by one of Tsi Wang's generals, and in order to make the blow the more crushing he collected all his strength for a supreme effort. Before the rising tempest Tsi Wang would have yielded, but it was too late. He sought an ally in the King of Corea, who had suffered from the aggressiveness of the Khitans, but his envoy returned with the depressing judgment that their alliance would be valueless as they possessed no arms, and were destitute of all knowledge of war.† Tsi Wang had to rely solely upon his own resources. The two armies came face to face on the banks of the River Touho, and they remained so for some months, neither caring to strike the decisive blow without long deliberation. In the skirmishes which took place the Tartars were generally the more fortunate, and at length Tekwang by a skilful manœuvre succeeded in shutting the Imperial army up in its camp, when want of provisions compelled its speedy surrender. The surrender of his army involved for Tsi Wang the loss of his crown. Before he could make any fresh preparations for defence,

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* The defeated Tartar generals were reprimanded by their king, and ordered to receive several hundred lashes with a whip. Had they been Chinese they would have been executed.

† That is, they had forgotten what they did know.

his capital was in the possession of the Khitans, and his abdication and retirement into private life* followed an abortive attempt to commit suicide. With this act the dynasty of the Later Tsins reached its consummation. Tekwang held for a short time possession of the capital, and then retired to his own dominions. He wished to place a puppet prince upon the throne as master of the Empire, but his own death arrested the plans which he had formed. Lieouchi Yuen a trusted companion of the first Emperor of this dynasty was placed on the throne by the public voice, and took the name of Kaotsou of the later Han dynasty.

This new family only enjoyed the possession of its high titular rank for the short space of four years. Lieouchi Yuen, who gave some proof of the possession of great qualities, died less than two years after he snatched the state out of the grasp of the Khitans, and his son Ynti succeeded him. The Khitans of Leaoutung seized what they thought a favourable opportunity to renew their enterprise; but Kwo Wei, who had been left by Lieouchi Yuen as the chief adviser of his son, baffled their attempt by winning several victories over them. Ynti turned his increasing security to reckless account by indulging his passion for idle pleasures. The season for such conduct was singularly inopportune, as the Empire had barely escaped a great danger, which might at any moment recur. On Kwo Wei's return from his victorious campaign in the north he was received with such

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* Tekwang sent him "to Tartary."

acclamations by the people that he determined to no longer defer the design he had for some time secretly cherished of placing himself upon the throne. Ynti, anticipating the popular verdict, fled from his capital, but was murdered in a neighbouring village by some of Kwo Wei's soldiers who, it is asserted, did not recognise him. His son occupied the throne for a few days, but was deposed. Within four years of the departure of Tekwang, the Tartar king, another dynasty had run its transient course, and rapidly reached its point of collapse.

Kwo Wei became the founder of the fifth* and last of these insignificant dynasties. His career was cut short when he had only governed the country for three years. He had many difficulties to contend against, but he seemed in a fair way to overcoming them when his death removed him from the scene. It is said that it was during his reign† that the Mahomedans, who had been both conquering and colonising most of the countries west of China during the last three centuries, first established themselves in China. There had no doubt been other immigrants of the same creed before this, but their progress first began to attract attention in this reign. Of Chitsong, his adopted son and successor, there is little to be said. He possessed many virtues, and endeavoured to restore the Empire from its fallen state; but

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* Heou Chow.

† Among the most notable of the sayings preserved of this Emperor was that calling Confucius "the master of Kings and Emperors."

his life was too short to admit of much more than the formation of plans which were never destined to be carried out. In the six years of his reign he obtained several successes in the south, and established his power more vigorously on the banks of the Great River.* He even drew up a scheme for the expulsion of the Tartars, but at the very point when he formed the most ambitious of all his plans his career terminated with his sudden death. His son Kongti only reigned for a few months after him, and he was then deposed by his minister Chow Kwang Yn the founder of the great dynasty of the Sungs.

The close of these five dynasties, which occupied the throne for less than sixty years in all, marks the end also of the petty rulers of China. In the future there will, at intervals, be the repetition of the old weakness, and the decline of the Empire will be sometimes marked in face of the greater but more transient reputation of a neighbouring and foreign people; but there will at least be in its misfortunes an absence of any pettiness similar to that under these princes. China has often since stood apparently on the verge of ruin, but even when she has done so her triumphant enemies have presented a scarcely less interesting theme for description than the even tenour of her own history. These petty dynasties served no doubt their momentary purposes, but with their dis-

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* One of his most remarkable achievements was the construction of a canal "in ten days," from the Hoeiho into the Yangtsekiang, navigable for ships of war.

appearance, nearly a thousand years ago,* the starting point of China's Imperial power on a sound and durable basis may be considered to have been reached in the founding of the dynasty of the Sungs.

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* In the nine hundred and twenty years that have since elapsed, China has been governed by only four dynasties, the Sung, the Yuen, the Ming, and the Manchu still reigning—a fact unparalleled in the history of any other people or Empire.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SUNG DYNASTY.

The Reunion of the Empire.

Chow Kwang Yn.—A Patriot.—His First Acts.—Gives his Dynasty a Name.—His Accessibility.—Army Regulations.—Strikes at the Independent Governors.—The Prince of Han.—Tartars of Leaoutung.—Loochow.—Rising of Li Chongsin.—Niutchin Tartars.—Power of Life and Death.—Independent Princes or Nominated Governors.—The Troubles of the Feudatories.—Honan and Kiangnan.—Subdued.—Chowpou.—Szchuen.—Invaded by Taitsou.—And Conquered.—Population.—War in the North.—Taiyuen.—Siege of.—A Victory.—Close of Campaign.—Nanhan.—Prince of Tang.—Completion of Taitsou's Task.—Peace with Leaoutung.—Death of Taitsou.—His Last Words.—Character of.—His Brother Succeeds him.—Taitsong.—His Preparations.—War with Han.—The Maiden Fortress of Taiyuen.—The Tartars.—Surrender of Taiyuen.—And Fall of Hans.—Leaoutung.—Battle of Kaoleang.—Resolution under Reverse.—Yeliu Hiuco.—A Great General.—The Mainstay of the Tartars.—The Coreans.—Imperial Defeats.—Disaster at the Chaho.—And at Feihou.—Triumph of the Tartars.—"A Man of the People."—Death of Taitsong.—Character.—A Strategist.—Chintsong.—Hiuco's Death.—Troubles in Szchuen.—Proposal to Move the Capital.—Kaochun.—An Unsatisfactory Peace.—Unfavourable Change in Chintsong's Character.—Superstitious.—His Trust in Miracles.—A Celestial Book.—Death.—The Union of the Empire.—Results.—Increase of Population.

CHOW KWANG YN* took up the task which the death

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* Chow Kwang Yn, unlike most of the soldiers who had risen to power during these years, was a Chinese by birth. He had

of Chitsong had left half finished and incomplete; and it was his good fortune to complete it. The country prayed for peace, and was anxious to give all the support it could to a man acting for its interests. Public spirit had become extinct during the years when the Empire had been the lottery of soldiers, and when ruler succeeded ruler with a rapidity which was in itself the strongest inducement to the ambitious to advance their claims. Chow Kwang Yn had therefore in the first place to raise the public spirit, and to show incontestably that he had other ends in view than the mere attainment of power. In short he was a patriot. It was the independence of the Chinese Empire for which he fought, and, although some of the credit is due to Chitsong as having paved the way to success, it was by his own unaided abilities that he attained the great object of his life.

The people hailed his advent to power with acclamations of joy. Signs were seen in the heavens proclaiming that it was the will of God that he should rule over the Empire, while his devoted soldiers adopted a more trenchant argument when they pointed to their swords. "The Empire is without a

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distinguished himself greatly in the wars carried on by Chitsong for the restoration of the Empire. On one occasion it may even be said that his presence of mind saved the day in the battle at Kaoping. He showed great capacity in the campaigns south of the Great River and against the Tang Prince of Szchuen. He was born in a village near the modern Pekin, of which place, then a small town called Yeoutou, several of his relations had been governors. His father had succeeded to an office which had almost become hereditary in his family. Chow Kwang Yn served his earlier years in the guards, and is represented as having been of majestic appearance.

master," they said, "and we wish to give it one. Who is more worthy of it than our general?" The first acts of the new Emperor proclaimed the man. A general pardon was granted to all, and a proclamation was issued to the whole Empire, and sent into provinces defiant towards the Imperial authority, ordering the observance of the laws, and the preservation of domestic peace. At the same time Chow Kwang Yn gave his dynasty the name of the Sung,* declared red to be the Imperial colour, and himself assumed the style of Taitsou.

He then restored to the lettered classes the privileges of which they had been deprived during the previous troubles, and, although not a learned man himself,† encouraged learning by all the means in his power. He took these steps not for the advantage of any particular section, but for the general welfare of his people, believing that knowledge must be good, and its extension beneficial to the best interests of the nation. He made the happiness of the greatest number the chief object of his policy, and boasted that the meanest of his subjects might approach him at all times and at any hour. For this purpose he had the doors and gates of his own palace left open both during the day and at night, wishing to show that his house resembled his heart, "which was open to all his subjects." To the reform of his military organisation he devoted not less attention than he did to domestic

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* From the name of a province which he had governed.
† In the sense meant by a Chinese literatus.

affairs. He drew up a system of examination for entrance into the army and for promotion in its ranks, which was practical and well adapted to the end in view. It required from officers some unequivocal proof that they were physically capable of performing their duties, and that they possessed some acquaintance with military subjects.* Taitsou showed not less attention to the interests of the soldier, with whose privations he had all the sympathy of an old campaigner.

By the confidence of success perceptible in everything that he undertook, the founder of the Sungs had disarmed many of his adversaries, who dreaded an overthrow that appeared to their impressed imaginations to be inevitable. Several governors sent in their formal submission, while others who had entertained the idea of rebellion banished it from their minds. The area included within the provinces of such governors as these was far from representing the full extent of the Empire, and it was both for the conquest of the districts held by foreign tribes and rulers as well as for the complete pacification of those within his immediate sphere that Taitsou drew his military strength together, and added to its efficiency by every means in his power.

The first and the most serious danger arose from the aggressions of a potentate in the north, named the

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* Pauthier thirty years ago commented on this thus: "The laws of military promotion in the states of Europe are far from being as rational and equitable." We have since progressed towards a Chinese standard of excellence.

Prince of Han,* who had entered into an alliance with the Leaous or Khitans. A war was on the point of commencing with these allies when Chow Kwang Yn's attention was called away by Chitsong's death; but he had hardly settled the most pressing matters when it threatened to break out afresh. The Prince of Han refused to recognise the new regime, and drew closer the bonds of friendship with the Tartar prince of Leaoutung. He won over to his side the governor of the important border city of Loochow, thus precipitating the conflict, for Taitsou saw that it behoved him to strike at this confederacy before it should assume larger and more dangerous proportions. He accordingly sent several bodies of troops in the direction of Loochow, and, in A.D. 960, he took the field in person, at the head of a large army. Having inflicted a severe defeat on the rebel's army in the field, near the village of Tsechow, where several of the Han officers were slain, Taitsou had the satisfaction a few days later of entering Loochow itself, which had been seized by one of his lieutenants. The governor in despair saved his honour by perishing in the flames of his own residence. The Emperor returned to his capital after this success, remarkable alike for its rapidity and completeness, but he had hardly done so when his attention was called away to a rising within his own dominions. Li Chongsin had shared with the Sung Emperor in earlier days his military career, and when the change was effected in the dynasty he was con-

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* A member of the Heou Han family.

firmed in his governorship by his former comrade. But Li Chongsin cherished dreams of a higher ambition, and he thought he saw in this formidable northern rising a favourable opportunity for asserting his own position as an independent prince. Taitsou's rapid success undeceived him as to the feasibility of his enterprise, but yet it was not sufficiently rapid to prevent his revealing the design he had entertained. Taitsou's measures in face of this new danger were prompt and adequate. Taking the field in person with a small but select body of troops, Taitsou advanced by forced marches on Kwangling, where he arrived when Li Chongsin least expected him. Li Chongsin, seeing that resistance would be futile, also set fire to his palace and perished in the flames. Having thus satisfactorily disposed of two difficult questions, and checked the pretensions of two rivals, Taitsou obtained more leisure to carefully survey his position, which was one still calling for much tact, courage, and fertility of resource.*

About this time the Niutchin Tartars,† a tribe in Western China, came to Taitsou's court with presents of horses and pledges of good service. He received them favourably and granted them the island of Chamen‡ as a place of residence, where they should

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* The Emperor's mother died this year, A.D. 961, and on her deathbed warned him that, as he had only won the Empire because Kongti was a child, he should take care to leave it on his death to one of his brothers as men of mature age, a piece of advice which, as the result showed, Taitsou took to heart.

† The northern branch of these afterwards became the Kins.

‡ There is some reason for identifying Chamen with Hainan, the rich and fertile island south of the Kwantung promontory.

be exempt from liability for service on public works. In this voluntary surrender, imitated by several other of the western tribes and peoples, may be seen a formal acknowledgment of the progress the Sung ruler was making towards accomplishing the reunion of the Empire.

The most important act of this period of his reign was undoubtedly the decree taking from the provincial governors the power of life and death which they had hitherto possessed. Henceforth it was ordered that no criminal should be executed without the Emperor's express sanction, and that a statement of every case should be sent to him for consideration; for, said he, "as life is the dearest thing men possess, should it be placed at the disposal of an official, often unjust or wicked." The effect of this act was not only beneficial to the people, but it was followed by consequences tending to strengthen the position of the Emperor. Not merely was it a change in favour of the personal liberty of the subject, but it had the effect of promoting the influence of the ruler by restricting the power of his viceroys. It became the chief object of Taitsou's policy to undermine the power of the semi-independent princes who remained, and to turn them into governors holding office at his command. The whole purpose of his life was to sweep away these states within the state, and to again place on a firm foundation the central authority of the Emperor. There was also involved in this the old disputed point whether the succession to vacant governorships rested with the ruler, or

whether it was to be hereditary in the family of the occupant. On the way in which this principle was settled depended more than upon any other circumstance the tranquillity of the Empire. Taitsou had not to wait long before the occasion offered of carrying his new resolution into execution.

The condition of these principalities represented in miniature the state of the Empire under recent dynasties. The prince or governor had in his conduct to his liege lord set an example which his own subordinates were not backward in imitating. The chief of a small district, especially if it contained a fortified town, aspired to independence, which in his eyes meant the possession of a standing army, and the right to wring as much money as he could out of the pockets of those placed under him. The conflict of rival pretensions was unceasing, and led to a strife between those who had and those others who wished to have, which was apparently endless. Taitsou remained a vigilant observer of these quarrels, prepared to intervene whenever the opportunity offered of reasserting the claims of the state. In Honan and Kiangnan there had been a contest of authority, and while in the former it had gone hard with the governor, who had been reduced to extremities by one of his vassals, in the latter the viceroy had successfully maintained his position, and was fairly on the way to establish an irresponsible and independent government of his own. It was against these that Taitsou resolved to act without further delay. His measures were taken with such secresy and promptitude that

he attained his ends without encountering any resistance. The army he placed in the field was of overwhelming strength, for Taitsou had learnt, and wished to practise the true humanity of war; and the campaign was fought and won without the shedding of a drop of blood. Two fertile provinces in the heart of the country, with a population of at least ten millions, were thus added to the dominions of the Sung Emperor.

In the north the Han prince and the kingdom of Leaoutung were still not only hostile, but defiant. The Emperor wished to wage war against them, but his prudent minister Chowpou dissuaded him from the attempt. The task would necessarily be a difficult and a dangerous one, and success would depend on a variety of circumstances over which it would be impossible to exercise any certain control. It would be wiser, he insisted, to leave the settlement of this question until the last; and Taitsou adopted his opinion.

In the south there was another question, scarcely less pressing than that in the north, awaiting solution, and one, moreover, which was attended with less danger. In Szchuen the old kingdom of Chow had been revived, and had maintained its own independence and tranquillity during the stormy century through which China had been passing. Incited by the representations of the Prince of Han, and encouraged by promises of support from various quarters, the ruler of this state came to the rash conclusion that he could cope with, and destroy the new power of the Sungs. He accordingly declared war, and

made preparations for the invasion of Honan. He had miscalculated his strength, but he had still more grievously mistaken his adversary. As soon as Taitsou learnt the malign intentions of his neighbours he took prompt steps to anticipate the invasion of his dominions, by ordering sixty thousand troops to enter Szchuen from the side of Shensi. The success of his generals must have surpassed his most sanguine expectations. In less than two months the whole province was in his hands, and the ruling family prisoners at his court. A fertile province, commanding the navigation of the Great River, and twenty-six millions* of new subjects were added at a stroke to the dominions of the new Emperor. Taitsou did not accompany this expedition in person, but in his palace his thoughts were ever with his brave army. A heavy fall of snow reminded him of their privations, and, taking off his own furred coat, he sent it to the general in command with the wish that he had as many more coats as might provide each of his soldiers with one. This thoughtful act excited the enthusiasm of the army, which had already accomplished such remarkable and gallant actions.

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* Five million three hundred and four thousand and ninety-nine families paying tribute.—Mailla, vol. viii. p. 34. Many writers, Medhurst and others, have called attention to, and endeavoured to explain, the large increase and decrease shown by official censuses within very short periods. This appears to us to be in all cases explained by the extent of the Empire, whether limited or enlarged. Disastrous as were the consequences of civil war, they were on nothing approaching the terrible scale suggested by comparison of the different censuses. Here alone we see that by the conquest of three provinces in China itself Taitsou added nearly forty millions to the population.

Some years of peace followed these decisive successes, and in A.D. 969 Taitsou had made all his preparations for the prosecution of the war which had been threatening since the beginning of his reign with his northern neighbours, the Prince of Han, and the King of Leaoutung. Nor had his opponents been backward in preparations on their side, and when one of Taitsou's generals advanced from the frontier he found himself in face of an army numerically so much his superior that he was compelled to beat a hasty retreat. The Tartar troops pursued him, harassed his rear, and committed depredations within the frontier. At this Taitsou was greatly irritated, and blamed his lieutenant not for declining an unequal battle, but for a precipitate retreat which exposed many unprotected towns and villages to the insults and attacks of the enemy. Taitsou was far too practical to waste precious time in recriminations. Even while he censured his commander he moved up reinforcements in large numbers at the head of which he placed himself. Before this fresh army the enemy in turn gave way, taking refuge in the Han capital, Taiyuen, to which Taitsou laid close siege.

Taitsou drew up his lines in front of this celebrated place, and surrounded it with a wall. He also endeavoured to flood the town by diverting two neighbouring rivers from their courses. In short he employed every means known to the engineers of that time to render the place untenable, but the defenders gallantly held out meeting every attack with resolution, and each device with some counter-device. In

the meanwhile a Tartar army was advancing out of Leaoutung to the relief of the garrison, but Taitsou went out to meet it, and won a signal victory. The King of Leaoutung resolved to make another attempt sooner than leave his army in jeopardy, and he collected the whole military force of the state, and despatched it to the relief of the gallant garrison still holding out at Taiyuen. In face of this great host, and also on account of the inclemency of the season, Taitsou adopted the prudent course of retreating from before the walls of Taiyuen. The disappointment was no doubt great, but the result showed the wisdom of the previous advice of his minister Chowpou. The campaign may be regarded as having closed without any decisive result to either side, but Taitsou undoubtedly returned baffled in his main object to his capital.

A fresh question awaited his consideration in the south. A prince of the Nan, or Southern Hans held possession of Kwantung and a portion of Kwangsi, and was found to be implicated in several of the schemes formed for the overthrow of the Sung power.

It was resolved to take advantage of the lull in the contest in the north to reduce this potentate to a better sense of his own position, and of his obligations to the Emperor. Taitsou entrusted the task to his general, Panmei, and he had the speedy satisfaction of finding another of the great Chinese provinces reduced and subjected to his authority. This conquest was particularly grateful to the Emperor because it gave him increased means of asserting his claims with regard to

the peoples of the south, although it only added, according to the official statement, less than one million subjects* to the Empire.

There now only remained, among the independent governors of the previous dynasty, to be brought to a sense of order the Prince of Tang, whose territory embraced the modern provinces of Kiangnan. Warned by the fate of others the Prince of Tang was very circumspect in his conduct, and strove to deprive the Emperor of all excuse for attacking him. But Taitsou was as wily in artifice as he was brave in action. He detained the envoys sent by the Tang prince, and when he asked for an explanation he was informed that he should come in person to pay his respects to the Emperor. This the Tang prince refused to do because Taitsou declined to send him a patent for his states as a prince of the first order. Taitsou at once ordered the invasion of Kiangnan, and entrusted the task of its subjection to Tsowpin, his favourite general. The troops of the Prince of Tang fought well, but they were badly led, and had little affection for the cause in which they bled. Driven from the field they took shelter in the few fortresses in the country, but these were captured one after the other by Tsowpin or his lieutenants. Within a year of the crossing of the frontier Kiangnan had been reduced to the condition of a province of the Sungs. There

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* This appears exceedingly low, almost as if there were a misprint. "170,263 tribute-paying families" is given in Mailla; the present population is computed at between seven and eight millions.

must in consequence have been a large addition to the population,* but the exact number has not been preserved. This brilliant feat completed the task which Taitsou himself was destined to attain, and made his authority unquestioned in most of the provinces south of the Hoangho.

Taitsou completed the effect of these military successes by concluding a peace with the people of Leaoutung, thus depriving the prince of the northern Han of his chief allies. Having by this diplomatic success turned the rear of his adversary he concentrated a large army, and marched on Taiyuen from which he had, some years before, been compelled to beat a hasty retreat. He now renewed the attempt with increased force, and such better hope of success that he gave out that he intended conquering the dominions of the Pehan† in the course of one campaign. But the progress of the war depended on a higher decision than his. The first skirmishes had been fought and won, and the operations for the capture of Taiyuen were in train, when the announcement of the Emperor's serious illness caused active measures to be suspended. The troops which had been in the course of performing several important movements retraced their steps, and were collected in the camp round the expiring Emperor.

Taitsou was at the end mindful of the advice of his dying mother. He left the Empire to his brother,

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* Probably ten millions.
† Pehan or Northern Han.

Chow Kwang Y, Prince of Tsin, and his last words to him were, "Bear yourself as becomes a brave prince, and govern well." Taitsou had only occupied the throne for seventeen years, but in that short time he had done much towards effecting the reunion of the country. He had abased the pretentions of the ambitious and tyrannical governors who ruled only for their own pleasure and profit, and the peoples of China owed to his generous sense of humanity a government which made the happiness and welfare of the nation its main object. Taitsou's reign was a succession of wars, decided, however, by the display of skill, and with as little carnage as possible. They were fought also for the most laudable of objects—the unity of the state, and the government of a great people by a sovereign of its own race. The founder of the Sungs received the Imperial dignity when it expressed little more than an empty pretence, but in his hands it acquired such substance and reality that he left it to his successor as a possession of the greatest value.*

The new ruler on his accession to the throne took the name of Taitsong, and his first acts showed that he was fully determined not only to keep what his brother had won, but also to complete the task which he had carried so far towards a successful conclusion.

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* The character of Taitsou may be accurately inferred from the following sentence: "Do you think that it is so easy," he said, "for a sovereign to perform his duties? He does nothing that is without consequence. This morning the thought comes to me that I have decided a case in a wrong manner, and this memory robs me of all my joy."

Of China Proper there only remained to be subdued a small portion of Kwantung and Fuhkien, besides the northern states of Han and Leaoutung. In preparation for the struggle with the latter, Taitsong caused the frontiers touching these independent states to be placed in a better state of defence, and entrusted the commands of the border posts to the most skilful of his lieutenants. The result of these prudent arrangements was clearly demonstrated in the hesitation shown by his neighbours to come into collision with him, although they might reasonably have expected that after Taitsou's death there would have been a decline in the vigour of the Emperor's authority.*

The war with the northern Han, which Taitsou's death had interrupted, was not resumed until Taitsong had occupied the throne for three years. There were some opposed to its resumption on public grounds, holding that enough had been done towards the vindication of the national dignity, but the opinion of the Emperor himself, and of a majority in his council, was distinctly in favour of the view that the security of what had been accomplished was not assured so long as this hostile and military power held possession of the northern gates of the Empire. So it was resolved to renew the enterprise that had once resulted in failure, and that had a second time been abandoned; and forthwith the Imperial legions were directed to

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* Among not the least remarkable of Taitsong's first acts must be placed the restoration of their privileges to the descendants of Confucius, viz., the exemption from being taxed and the possession of a hereditary title.

march on the maiden fortress of Taiyuen, which still flaunted the defiant banner of the Hans in the face of the Sung power. While the main army sat down in front of the Han capital a strong body of troops was despatched to take up a position to the north-east of the city at Cheling Koan, where it would be able to intercept any relieving force that the Tartars of Leaou-tung might attempt to send. The king of that people despatched an embassy to ask the Emperor for what reasons he was waging war with his friend, the Prince of Han ; but Taitsong was not in the humour to give a very satisfactory response. He replied with the haughtiness of a great monarch : " That the country of the Hans was one of the provinces of the Empire, and that its prince having refused to obey his orders he was determined to punish him. If your prince stands aside and does not meddle in this quarrel I am willing to continue to live at peace with him ; if he does not care to do this, we will fight him." The Leaou King, enraged at this reply, declared war, and sent a large army to the relief of Taiyuen. It was, however, checked by the corps despatched for that purpose, and compelled to halt before it reached the scene of action.

Taitsong pressed the siege of Taiyuen in person, and with unexampled vigour. He was prudent enough, however, to leave his opponent a golden bridge for retreat, and before delivering the final assault he offered him terms that were not only honourable but generous. Lieouki Yuen, Prince of Han, had the good sense to accept the propositions of the Emperor,

and recognising that further resistance to the Sungs would be futile he presented himself at the head of his officers in the Emperor's camp. Lieouki Yuen became one of the minor princes attached to the Court, and the subjection of his dominions removed the last of the great feudatories who had asserted their independence of the central authority. The conquest of this northern province brought the Empire face to face with the Tartar kingdom of Leaoutung, which had interfered in the affairs of the Empire on so many occasions during the preceding century, and which was now in its turn to feel the reviving power of the Chinese sovereign.

Taitsong anticipated being able to bring his war with the King of Leaoutung to a conclusion in a single campaign; but in this sanguine expectation he was showing too little consideration for the proverbial uncertainty of war. The first successes were his. Several cities opened their gates, and some of the Tartar officials, thinking that the evening of their master's fortunes had arrived, hastened to welcome the day-star of the Sung power. Taitsong, anxious to return to his capital, acted with a degree of precipitation which was highly imprudent when it is remembered that the Tartar army of Leaoutung had won a reputation for military prowess during a long career of unvaried success. Taitsong went out to meet the gathering strength of the Tartars in the hope that he would be able to strike a final blow before it could be concentrated; but although he fell upon one corps and defeated it, he was in turn attacked

by the main body. The battle was fought with great stubbornness on the banks of the Kaoleang river, and the Tartars vindicated their claims to be considered good soldiers by inflicting a severe defeat on the Chinese army. More than ten thousand of the Emperor's best troops fell on the field, and he himself had the greatest difficulty in effecting his escape, although he left all his baggage in the hands of the victorious Tartars. This defeat was a rude shock to Taitsong's dreams of speedy success, and it might have been followed by fresh troubles in the recently-conquered province of Pehan, but that he himself and his generals strove by the display of greater energy to repair the disaster. The fighting for some time after this great encounter partook of a desultory character, the success going now to one side, now to the other; but the measures taken by Taitsong were so far effectual that his authority in the newly-won province of Pehan remained undisputed and indisputable. In fact the people and soldiers of the whilom Prince of Han became the chief supporters of the Sung ruler in his war with the Tartars of Leaoutung. Yangyeh, the hero of this border war, had been the faithful general of the Hans to the last, and the most prominent of the defenders of the fortress-city of Taiyuen.

There can be no doubt that the Tartars were indebted for their successes to the skill and martial qualities of their general, Yeliu Hiuco. It was the division under his command which had turned the fate of the day at Kaoleang, and in all the later contests he carried off the palm on both sides for tactical knowledge as well as for

the personal characteristics essential to a great commander. For nearly twenty years he remained the chief prop and supporter of the Khitan* or Leaou state, which but for him would have failed to maintain itself against the determined onslaughts of the Chinese. After the campaign of which the defeat at Kaoleang was the salient feature peace endured for several years, although Taitsong's thoughts were constantly turning on the theme of how he might overthrow the power which had baffled him.

In A.D. 985 an opportunity of realising this object seemed to offer itself, when the Coreans sent an embassy to his court complaining of the conduct of the Tartars, and asking for assistance against them. Taitsong listened to their complaints with sympathy, and proposed an offensive and defensive alliance against the common enemy. At the same time he ordered several armies under his best generals to take the field, and to invade Leaoutung.† Whether the Tartars were taken by surprise, or whether they were explained by some other reasons of which we are not aware, the first battles were won by the Chinese, and the Tartars were forced to retire on several sides. The Emperor was congratulating himself on the success of his plans, and on the victories reported daily by messengers from his army, when the appearance of Yeliu Hiuco in the field changed the forture of the war,

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* About this time the name Leaou was changed back to Khitan.

† Leaoutung included a large portion of Pechihli, and a smaller portion of the north of Shansi.

and checked his felicitations. A defeat, scarcely less disastrous than that on the Kaoleang, to his principal army near the fortress of Kikieou Koan, north of the modern Pekin, was hardly announced when the news came that Hiuco had followed up his success with remarkable energy, and driven the remnants of the beaten army into the river Chaho. The loss was so great on that day that we are told that the corpses of the slain arrested the course of the river.* Other defeats followed this first decisive turn in the tide of war against the Emperor. His general, Panmei, was beaten with hardly less loss at Feihou,† and all the fruits of previous success were nullified. The Tartars were left virtual masters of the field.‡

During the remaining years of Taitsong's reign the Tartars carried on incessant hostilities with the Chinese, inflicting immense loss upon the peaceable inhabitants of the border districts. They turned also upon the Coreans, who had made some show of combining with the Emperor, but who now averted the penalty by making an abject surrender to their formidable neighbours. The ill success of this foreign war was, no doubt, a strong inducement to many within the realm to put forward their complaints and

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* Mailla, vol. viii. p. 102.

† North-east of modern Pekin.

‡ Not the least signal portion of their success was the defeat and capture of Yangyeh, who fought with the greatest desperation. His defeat, followed by his death from wounds, struck all the northern peoples with terror. "If Yangyeh could not resist the Tartars, they must be invincible," they said.—Mailla, vol. viii. pp. 104–106.

to air grievances which were more imaginary than real. "A man of the people" came forward in Szchuen as the redressor of public wrongs, and gave the authorities considerable trouble for many years. Taitsong was compelled to largely increase the garrison, and to carry on regular warfare in the mountainous districts of that province before the strong arm of the law was fully reasserted. Having clearly shown that violence and the breach of civil rights are not the way to obtain fresh privileges, Taitsong took steps to provide a remedy for the small grievance of which an ambitious and self-seeking agitator had sought to avail himself for the advancement of his own interests.

No glimmer of success in the war with the Tartars lit up the last years of the reign of Taitsong. They were still victorious and defiant, when his last illness seized this able ruler, who had governed China during twenty-two years with wisdom and moderation. The failure of his wars with the Tartars must, we think, be attributed to the exceptional ability of the Tartar general Hiuco who vanquished every opponent he was called upon to meet. But Taitsong's reverses in the wars with the Tartars cannot blot out his success in Pehan, and the skill he showed in maintaining peace within the limits of his wide-stretching dominions. Like the modern strategist he sought to direct the movements of a campaign from his palace, and on several occasions it would appear that his arms suffered a reverse because his generals had not adhered to his instructions. It is, however, as a wise administrator, and as a prince anxious to promote the best interests

of his people that he most deserves to be remembered.*

Chintsong, Taitsong's third son, succeeded him; and the surrender of a rebel, who had availed himself of Hiuco's victories to revive the pretensions of the Hans, afforded a favourable promise of a peaceful and satisfactory reign. But certainly a more important event was the death of Hiuco, to whom the Chinese historians ungrudgingly allow the foremost place among the generals of the age. When the long-standing quarrel between the two neighbours again came to the arbitrament of arms the loss of this wise commander was regretted and felt as much by his people as it was rejoiced in by the Chinese. The Tartars were the first to resume hostilities, but when they did so it was with such little skill that they were repulsed without difficulty by one of the border govenors. Chintsong proceeded in person to the frontier with a large army, and on his approach the Tartars thought it prudent to retire.

His attention was then called away to Szchuen, where the late insurrection had broken out afresh, principally through the mistakes made by the officials left in charge of the province by Taitsong. This disturbance entailed further bloodshed, and the inhabitants had suffered much from the horrors of civil war before Chintsong succeeded in re-establishing order

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* One of his last acts was to divide the Empire into fifteen provinces.

in this vast dependency. Having restored internal tranquillity, all Chintsong's thoughts turned on peace, and he set himself the task of reforming the administration in which great changes had been rendered necessary by the indiscriminate appointment of incompetent individuals to the ranks of the mandarins, or salaried officials. In one day he is said to have either suspended or removed from their posts one hundred and ninety-six thousand of these servants of the State!

But the Tartars of Leaoutung were not disposed to leave undisturbed so easy a prey as they had found the Chinese border provinces to be, and their incursions became daily more daring and more successful. So discouraged were the Chinese generals by their long ill fortune that they feared to encounter their opponents in the field, and their panic infected the court. In the year A.D. 1004 the Chinese ministers were so far discouraged by the failure of the war with Leaoutung that they brought forward in council a proposition for the withdrawal of the court from Pienchow or Kaifong to either Chentu or Kinling.* The chief minister, Kaochun, firmly opposed this view, saying that those who originated it were worthy of death, and that the proper place for the Emperor was at the head of his army in the field. Chintsong, who appears to have been of a mild and vacillating character, was won over to the bolder course by the arguments of this

* The former is in Szchuen, the latter in Houkwang.

minister, but his own timidity* represented a permanent obstacle to the carrying-out of a resolute policy. The arguments of Kaochun were always at hand, and in the end carried the day in the struggle going on in Chintsong's mind. The Chinese army crossed the Hoangho in force, with Chintsong at its head. Although the two forces, between whom there was so long a list of previous encounters to decide in favour of one or the other, were now face to face, no action took place. Both sides were disposed to grant a peace without appealing to a conclusive judgment. The Tartars surrendered several towns which they had captured, and the Chinese promised them an annual allowance in silk and money as an indemnity for the expense they had been put to in invading their dominions.

Chintsong had now occupied the throne for seven years, and they had been years of war; but during the remaining eighteen years of his life the Empire enjoyed a profound peace, when the wealth and

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* Kaochun addressed him as follows when he showed signs of reverting to the proposal to retire instead of advancing to encounter the national enemy: "Prince, Your Majesty can, without serious consequences, advance a foot farther than is absolutely necessary, but you cannot retire, even to the extent of an inch, without doing yourself much harm. Your troops are at the frontier, and know that Your Majesty comes to place yourself at their head. They expect you every day, and are persuaded that they will then be invincible. The mere rumour that Your Majesty thought of returning, especially after having advanced to this point, would tarnish your glory, and discourage your soldiers at the same time that it would elevate the courage of the Tartars, who, inflated by the spectacle of your flight, would not fail to pursue you, perhaps so energetically that you would not have the time to take shelter even at Kinling."

prosperity of the nation developed at a rapid rate. But if the consequences of his love of peace were beneficial in many ways, there was little estimable in the change which came over the character of Chintsong after his return from this expedition. One of his first acts was to disgrace the minister Kaochun, who had done such good service in that war, and to deprive him of his high offices, because it was represented to him by one of that minister's enemies that he had committed a breach of etiquette in concluding a treaty of peace under the walls of a town. In deference to a silly superstition the Emperor banished from his court the only man capable of giving him prudent and disinterested advice. After this Chintsong's downward course was rapid. He gave himself over to the most childish practices, and became the slave of those persons who flourish on the credulity of mankind. The last fifteen years of his reign afforded the melancholy spectacle of a man who decides the most important events of his life by appealing to a chance of which we cannot possess the key, and by referring to accidents and other fortuitous circumstances which can have nothing whatever to do with the everyday duties and difficulties of life. Chintsong became the bond-slave of the spiritualist and fanatic of his time, and some of the Chinese commentators have given his reign a special significance by making it the starting-point in the decline of the original worship of Changti, or the great God of all.

Little need be said of the sottish practices by which Chintsong placed himself on a level with the least

respectable of his subjects. He left the council-hall of the noble and the wise to have intercourse with the adventurer and the charlatan, and in the magician's chamber he found greater pleasure than in the fulfilment of the duties of his position as ruler of a great people. This falling-off in his manner of living was accompanied by an inevitable decline in his moral character. When he neglected and turned his back on his duties, he took the first downward step in his career, and when he sought to make up for the deficiencies of his conduct by appeals to prodigies and other miraculous tokens as evidence of the manner in which he was fulfilling his public duty, he completed the retrogression he had made in the opinion of all honourable men. His death, in A.D. 1022, closed this reign, which, in the commencement had given promise of exceptional brilliance; and in a spirit which we may take either as the height of satire or as the expression of affection, they buried with him the books which were said to have fallen from heaven,* and which had been the primal cause of the deterioration in his character, and of the consequent stultification of his reign.

The reigns of these three Emperors, Taitsou, Taitsong, and Chintsong, covering a period of rather more than sixty years, or one longer in duration than the

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* In the year A.D. 1008 it was announced to him that a book had fallen out of the heavens at one of the gates of the city. Although remonstrated with at his credulity, Chintsong proceeded on foot at the head of his courtiers to receive it, and erected a temple over the spot where it had been found.

tenure of power by the five preceding dynasties, are remarkable in themselves as witnessing the revival of the Emperor's authority, and also what may be called the reunion of the Empire. The wars with the Tartars of Leaoutung were not as successful as they should have been, and the danger from that quarter continued until it assumed larger and graver proportions in the hands of the Kins. With that exception the Sungs were successful on all sides, and they conferred many benefits on the people of China, which they again raised to the rank of a great Power. The surest test of the progress made by the nation in material well-being is afforded in the official census already more than once mentioned. In the year A.D. 1013 Chintsong ascertained that there were among his subjects nearly twenty-two millions* of men occupied in agriculture alone, and when it is remembered that these included neither women nor children, nor those employed in other pursuits, it appears to be a moderate estimate to say that the population of the Sung dominions exceeded one hundred millions. This unimpeachable fact is the strongest evidence in favour of the excellence of the administration of the first three Emperors of the Sung family. When Taitsou came to the front he found the reputation of the Empire sunk to the ground, and only the name of China's greatness remained. By restoring its unity he did much towards repairing the

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* Twenty-one millions nine hundred and seventy-six thousand nine hundred and sixty-five exactly.

folly of previous rulers, and if it was not destined that the Sungs should raise the country to as high a point as it had attained under the great Tsins, Hans, and Tangs, they may certainly claim to have restored to it the blessings—long unknown—of internal peace and good government.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SUNG DYNASTY—*continued.*

Jintsong to the change in the Capital.

Jintsong.—A Regent.—Edicts against Magicians, &c.—The Prince of Hia.—Chao Yuen.—War.—A Brave General.—Khitans.—Subsidies.—Hia.—The Colleges.—A Great History.—Ssema-kwang.—A Literary Club.—"Men in Public Service."—A Golden Age of Literature.—Yntsong.—Chintsong the Second.—Hanki.—A Clique.—Fine Sentiment.—Wanganchi.—A Reformer.—"Socialist."—His Scheme.—Its Promise.—And Failure.—Fall of Wanganchi.—What has been said about him.—Chetsong.—Great Floods.—The Eunuchs.—Precepts of Government.—Hoeitsong.—The Empress Mongchi.—Flatterers.—The Doctrine of Infallibility.—Grandiose Plans.—The Niuchè, or Chorches.—Akouta.—The "Golden" Dynasty.—A Great Warrior.—Khitan Defeats.—The Advent of a New Power.—Art of War.—Hoeitsong Warned.—An Unequal Alliance.—Chinese Defeats.—Kin Victories.—Fall of Khitans of Leaoutung.—Death of Akouta.—The Kara Khitay.—Oukimai.—Hoeitsong Abdicates.—Kintsong.—Walipou.—A Heavy Indemnity.—Hoangho Crossed.—Siege of Capital.—Prisoner Emperors.—Die in Tartary.—Causes of Decadence of Sungs.—Change of Capital.—Kaotsong.

JINTSONG, the sixth son of the late ruler, was only thirteen years of age when his father died, and the reins of authority were placed in the hands of his

mother. Being a woman not less capable than ambitious, she retained the chief authority until her death, which took place eleven years later, and thus for one fourth of his long reign Jintsong enjoyed nothing more than the name of power.

The first acts of the Empress-mother were marked by a wisdom and an appreciation of the national wants which never left her government. The unpopular taxes on tea and salt—which the expenses of a prolonged war had rendered it necessary to continue—were repealed, and a board was appointed with authority to supervise the taxation so that the people might not be oppressed. Having thus provided for the interests of the masses, the Empress determined to proceed with vigour against the magicians, spiritualists and other impostors, who, encouraged by the late ruler, were prospering on the credulity of the nation. To such a pass had the machinations of these personages come that in several provinces they had compelled the doctors to give up their profession by inducing the people to consult them instead in all cases of sickness. An order was issued for the destruction of their meeting-houses, and of the laboratories where they either concocted their noxious drugs or performed their weird ceremonies, and it was carried into execution with all the energy of a body of men who felt that their own interests had been endangered by the foibles* of

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* There were those among the public not without a keen sense of the folly of these proceedings. They saw also in them the hand of the Evil One, and with popular humour they named the five chief courtiers "the five devils."—Mailla, vol. viii. p. 118.

the Emperor Chintsong. In truth the danger to public morality and national interests had reached such a pass that extreme measures were necessary to again place the condition of public affairs on a satisfactory and durable foundation.

During the ten years' rule of the Empress-mother there was peace in the land, and her conduct appears to have been throughout most exemplary, although in the last year of her life, whether through a freak of vanity, or with some ulterior design, she usurped certain functions which were considered the prerogative of an Emperor. Her death took place in A.D. 1033, when Jintsong became the responsible ruler of China, and his first act was to pay exceptional honours to the memory of the great minister, Kaochun, who had been disgraced by his father.

During the peace, which had now endured for more than ten years, the rebel who first appeared in the previous reign had consolidated his power, and dying, left a large tract of country to his son. The Tartars of Leaoutung had seen the growth of this new state with some feeling of dismay, and had sought to compass its destruction by the conquest of the territory of the Hiuho in western Kansuh. In this they failed; and Chao Yuen, the grandson of the founder of this state, became the stronger and the more confident. The Emperor sent him the patent of Prince of Hia,* but this young ruler, seeing how easy a prey were his northern pro-

* Hia or Tangut may be taken as modern Kansuh, with portions of the adjoining desert.

vinces, thought rather of attacking him than of living with his neighbour on terms of peace and friendship. Meantime he drilled his soldiers every day after the fashion of the Chinese manual, collected arms and munitions of war, and, out of his just appreciation of the decline in the efficiency of the Chinese army through a long peace, originated a policy inimical to the Emperor, and favourable to the Tartars, who had recently striven to bring about the ruin of his state. In A.D. 1034 he turned his arms for the first time against the Chinese, and he employed them with success. He could plead as an excuse that a border governor had given him some justification for commencing hostilities by invading a portion of his territory. He lost some of the fruits of this campaign the following year in a campaign with the Tibetans, when one of his lieutenants was defeated and taken prisoner. Nothing dispirited, he renewed the war with fresh troops, and placed one hundred and fifty thousand well-trained soldiers in the field. The Tibetans who then held possession of all the country touching China on the west could not hold their own against this overwhelming force, and were compelled to give ground before their adversary.

Encouraged by his success, Chao Yuen resolved to assume a higher style than that of Prince of Hia, and "because he came of a family several of whose members had in times past borne the Imperial dignity,"*

* He wrote a long letter explanatory of his motives to the Emperor, for which see Mailla, vol. viii. pp. 202–203. He concluded by hoping that there would be "a constant and solid peace between the two Empires."

he took the title of Emperor. Peaceful as Jintsong's disposition was, he resented the assumption by a neighbour of a dignity equal to his own, and instead of taking measures to improve his relations with this ruler he spared no effort to form a league against him. Having met with some degree of success in these plans he issued a proclamation forbidding his subjects to hold any intercourse with the people of Hia, and placed a price on the head of their king. Chao Yuen, enraged at this slight to his honour, answered threat with threat, and returned Jintsong the letters-patent which had on various occasions been sent him by Chinese rulers. The war thus provoked proved long, and disastrous for the arms of the Empire.

Well trained in its duties, and skilfully led by its great chief, the Hia army was able to take the field several weeks before the slower moving and less efficient forces of the Chinese ruler. The advantage of this celerity was shown by the capture of several towns, and by the moral strength which attaches to those who strike the first successful blow. Before Jintsong's troops had reached the frontier, Chao Yuen had advanced to a considerable distance within the Chinese territory. The armies encountered for the first time near the town of Sanchuen, when, after a stubborn fight of three days' duration, the advantage remained with the Hias. They came together again close to the town of Yang Moulong, and as both armies were in great force and equally confident of victory, this may be considered the decisive battle of the war. Each felt it to be so, and the commanders on either side resorted

to various schemes to obtain some slight advantage of position over their opponent. In these preliminary manœuvres, Chao Yuen, who commanded in person, showed greater skill than Jintsong's lieutenants, and his plan of action was so ably contrived that he succeeded in surrounding the Chinese army, and in taking it at a great disadvantage.* The Chinese fought with desperation, but the result was never in doubt. One after another their generals fell fighting bravely in the thick of the combat, and when night closed the flower of Jintsong's army encumbered the plain. Jinfou, the commanding officer, was wounded in several places, and entreated by one of his soldiers to quit the field, but he exclaimed, "I withdraw! the general of this army. The battle is indeed lost, but I can and ought to die." His body was afterwards found amid the thickest of the slain.

From this rude shock the Chinese did not easily recover. The consequences of so signal a defeat were made less serious than might have been anticipated by the prudence and good judgment shown by other commanders on the same frontier; but the success of the Hia king remained undimmed by any reverse. Jintsong was threatened by a fresh danger at this crisis. The Tartars of Leaoutung, seeing in this defeat a fresh chance for renewing their incursions, attacked the border towns, and acquired possession of no fewer

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* The signal for the attack was given to the different corps by means of pigeons placed in boxes on the Chinese line of march. When the Chinese arrived at the spot they opened them out of curiosity, and the pigeons flying out gave the signal to the Tartars to attack.—Mailla, vol. viii. pp. 211–212.

than ten cities. These they restored under the terms of a treaty in A.D. 1042, but the bad days, when the Empire trusted for peace and for the preservation of its rights to the skill of diplomatists rather than to the strong arm of a great government, were again threatening to return. The Tartars had obtained an ample recompense for their expedition in the plunder of several rich districts; but over and above this the weakness of the Emperor consented to give them an increased allowance of silk and money in addition to the annual present granted by Chintsong.*

In the same year negotiations were opened with Chao Yuen, the victorious king of Hia, and, although technical difficulties were raised in the path of the conclusion of a peace, Jintsong taking the matter into his own hands soon brought it to a speedy and successful issue. Seeing that Chao Yuen was restored to all his dignities, and that the Emperor agreed to pay him each year one hundred thousand pieces of silk and thirty thousand pounds of tea, there was little in this treaty for the Chinese to feel proud of, although at the time it arrested what appeared to be a grave danger from a successful soldier. In the following year the concessions were further augmented by the right conceded to Chao Yuen to construct fortified places on his frontier, but, although thus endeavouring to conclude and maintain a solid peace, there was distrust on both sides.†

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* See *ante* p. 383.

† Chao Yuen died shortly after these events. In A.D. 1048 he was assassinated by his son, Ninglingko, whose betrothed he had

Jintsong was able, after these treaties, and especially after the death of his principal opponent, to devote himself with greater assiduity to his natural inclination for peace. Among the most notable of his acts were the re-establishment of the colleges on their ancient footing as under the Tangs, and some other measures which he sanctioned for the advancement of national education. On the recommendation of his minister Fang Chung Yen, he caused a college to be built in every town, and appointed lecturers and professors to hold examinations and to direct the studies of the collegians. Jintsong was especially interested in the raising of the standard of public speaking, and gave prizes for excellence in recitation.* On the occasion of a visit to the chief college in the capital, dedicated to Confucius, Jintsong, wishing to show his respect for the man and the cause he represented, paid his memory the peculiar honour of prostrating himself before the door of the college.

Some years later, when his reign was approaching its close (A.D. 1060) he took steps for the publication of the great history of the Tangs as described in the official records of the Empire. The chief historians of the day were entrusted with its preparation, and as these included, among others of scarcely less note, the

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taken from him. The parricide was executed by one of the officers, and his younger brother, Li Tsian Tso, succeeded him. Chao Yuen was a remarkable man in many ways, and the best general of his day. He was only forty-six when he died.

* Pauthier says (p. 338), that the memorial in which Fang Chung Yen recommended these measures is preserved in a Chinese Chrestomathie entitled "Kou-wen-ping-tchou."

celebrated Ssemakwang,* there is no doubt that this work, which filled two hundred and twenty five volumes, is one of the most remarkable in the literature of China. The writings of Ssemakwang, Ginyang Sieou, Lieouju, and others, redeem Jintsong's reign from the character of mediocrity which might otherwise attach to it, if they do not absolutely stamp it as the golden age of literature under the Sungs. To the same period also belongs the introduction of the influence of the learned into the practical work of the administration. The historians named, and others, including the minister Fang Chung Yen, combined together to carry their views into execution, and as they were united among themselves, their influence was very great and made itself felt on all important questions. Complaints were made by the courtiers to the Emperor against this body of critics whose pencils were always ready to denounce measures not approved of by them, and to point out the shortcomings of ministers. At one

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* Ssemakwang was one of the most illustrious of Chinese historians. It was from his great history that Mailla took the period covered by it, and Gaubil has literally translated it. He was also an elegant writer, and "the Garden of Ssemakwang" holds a high place in the *belles lettres* of China. As a statesman he was scarcely inferior, although his rival Wanganchi had the upper hand during much of the second Chintsong's reign. On Wanganchi's fall Ssemakwang became first minister, but he died shortly afterwards. On the occasion of his funeral he met with a popular ovation, "the shops being shut," and the people manifesting their grief in no half-hearted fashion. —See Amiot's "Memoires sur les Chinois," t. x. p. 1, and "Biographie Universelle;" also Pauthier, p. 340. Extracts from his writings are given by Du Halde in his second volume. Ssemakwang was superior to all his contemporaries in the sobriety of his judgment and the common sense of his opinions. He encouraged no Utopian fancies.

time Jintsong seemed disposed to discourage if not to repress the activity of this body, because "men in the public service should not form a party amongst themselves." Ginyang Sieou, one of the most elegant of Chinese writers, replied to this covert censure in a treatise* which has been preserved. The line of argument which he adopted was ingenious, pointing out that the results of their association were good and beneficial for the nation, and that it was not to be confounded "with dangerous cabals formed for an unworthy object." The peace enjoyed during the last twenty years of Jintsong's reign cannot be held to have been turned to an unworthy purpose when we find that the arts and literature were held in such repute, and produced so many illustrious men.

In A.D. 1063, Jintsong† died, having occupied the throne during more than thirty years. His virtues were greater and more transparent than his abilities, but, if he failed to perform any striking achievement or to leave any deep impression in history, he succeeded in the not easy task of gaining the affection of his subjects and the esteem of those who served under him.

The short reign of his nephew Yntsong, his successor, requires but brief description. Ill-health compelled him at first to resign the reins of government into the hands of the Empress-mother, who proved herself well able to administer public affairs,

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* A translation of this is given in Du Halde, vol. ii.; see also Pauthier, p. 341.

† Jintsong means "the Humane Prince."

and when he resumed the discharge of his duties he devoted his time rather to the relaxation of study than to the cares of his office. His principal object was to provide Ssemakwang and other writers with appropriate tasks for their intellects, and to profit by discussion with them. Had he lived he might have shown that he had turned their counsels to good account, but his death in A.D. 1067, after a reign of four years, cut short his career, and left only the promise of what might have been.

Yntsong's son, Chintsong the Second, succeeded him, and soon showed that in many ways he was disposed to depart from the peaceful policy of his two predecessors. The necessities of the country, which had been long suffering from a scarcity produced by the want of rain, imposed a fetter on his inclination, and the advice of his mother further influenced him to adopt the prudent course of running as little risk as possible in foreign expeditions. Meanwhile the army was losing its efficiency through the long period of inaction that had followed the last war, and the country did not possess the services of a general capable of leading a large army in the field. The peaceful inclinations of these rulers produced beneficial results for the time being, but they were in the end to entail dire consequences, and great national misfortunes.

The young monarch became the tool of a clique which endeavoured to compass the disgrace of Hanki, the chief minister of the two preceding rulers, and they succeeded so far in their designs that he felt compelled to resign his office. On the occasion of his retirement

he was asked whether one of his rivals was a proper person to succeed him. He replied, with candour, that he might possibly be of service in the Hanlin College, but that he had not had the necessary experience for the highest office of all. When Hanki was warned of the danger his candour entailed he made the following noble reply, "A faithful subject ought ever to serve his prince with all the zeal of which he is capable. Good or bad fortune depends on Heaven, and, when we have done what we ought, should fear deter us and prevent us from continuing in the path of well-doing?" None the less for the excellent advice of the retiring sage, Chintsong gave the chief post in the ministry to this untried official, whose enactments excited so much discontent among the people, and such opposition in the palace that they had to be withdrawn. The ascendancy which he obtained over the mind of the young monarch was so great that, although banished from court on several occasions, he was always recalled and entrusted with some fresh office. Wanganchi, such was the name of this clever and unscrupulous minister or charlatan, was one of the most remarkable men who have figured in the history of his country. Although denounced as an impostor he might, if he had met with better success in his plans, have been handed down to posterity as one of the great Chinese reformers and national benefactors.

Wanganchi is described as a man of great attainments and much original power of thought. He compiled a cyclopædia, and wrote commentaries on the

classical writers; and he did not scruple to imitate the practice of many who came before and after him, and pervert the sense or strain the words of his author to extract a hidden meaning for adding some corroboratory evidence in favour of his own views. Like all reformers, he drew a picture in sanguine colours of the consequences that would ensue from his proposals, and his enthusiasm at times carried the whole force of public opinion round to his side. But his schemes were Utopian. "The State" he declared, "should take the entire management of commerce, industry, and agriculture into its own hands, with the view of succouring the working classes and preventing their being ground to the dust by the rich." During his term of office these views were carried into execution. The poor were to be exempt from taxation, land was allotted to them, and the seed-corn provided. Everyone was to have a sufficiency; there were to be no poor, no over-rich. The masses expected that their chosen minister would confer on them the greatest benefits, and the least discomfort entailed by human existence. China was to rejoice in an ideal happiness, because the people were to possess the main advantages of life which were stated to be plenty and pleasure.

These dreams were rudely dispelled by the reality. Although tribunals were appointed to direct and supervise the operations of the peasant proprietors, and although theoretically—man being assumed to be a perfect machine, unbiassed by passion or sordid motives—the scheme should have proved successful

and should have conferred great benefits on the people, it as a matter of fact produced none of these results, and was an unqualified failure. In Shensi, where it was most extensively put into practice, the cultivated land became greatly reduced in area and impoverished in quality, not merely through the unskilful treatment of the small holder, but also on account of the dislike inherent in man to protracted labour for which he does not see an immediate return. The statesman-historian Ssemakwang showed sounder judgment and a more accurate estimate of human nature than his rival when he denounced these views as chimerical. But as men are swayed by their hopes, and as the statesman, whose argument is based on what the future —painted in his own brilliant colours—may bring forth, must always have the advantage over, and attract more sympathy than, those who dwell on the merits of the past and oppose change, Wanganchi triumphed over the sage Ssemakwang, and long had the great majority of his countrymen at his back. It was only when it could no longer be denied that his schemes had proved abortive, and that his regulations were mischievous, that he lost the sympathy of the public which had sustained him in his contest with the learned classes headed by Ssemakwang. The royal favour supported him for a short time longer, and then came his fall. He survived his disgrace ten years, dying in the year A.D. 1086, when a new ruler had succeeded his patron Chintsong. He protested to the end that his scheme was sound, and admitted of practical application, but he does not appear to

have been wronged in being styled the Chinese Socialist or visionary and speculative minister of the eleventh century.* His fortunes proved scarcely less fluctuating after his death than they had been during his life. In the year following his decease the Empress Regent prohibited, under penalty of dismissal from the public service, the use of his commentaries, which had been in vogue. Twenty years later his name was placed in the Hall of Confucius, on the ground that since Mencius there had been no one to compare with Wanganchi—a privilege of which the Emperor Kintsong deprived his memory in A.D. 1126, when Wanganchi's name finally disappears from the public records.

Chintsong's last acts were to divide his dominions into twenty-three provinces, and to receive from the hands of the great historians the works upon which

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* By many he has been treated as an "infidel," a "free-thinker," and the term "Nihilist" has been coupled with his name. One remarkable sentiment is preserved in the following sentence. Protesting against the Emperor's attempting to propitiate the elements on the appearance of natural phenomena, he said: "These calamities have settled and unvarying causes; earthquakes, droughts, and inundations have no connection with the actions of man. Do you hope to change the ordinary course of things, and that Nature should alter her laws for you?" For much further information of interest concerning Wanganchi, see Sousiun's sketch in Du Halde, vol. ii.; Abel Remusat's "Nouveaux Melanges Asiatiques," and the Abbé Huc's "Chinese Empire," vol. ii. We may avail ourselves of this opportunity to express our great debt to the latter writer. Exception has sometimes been taken to his statements, and rather grudging praise has been given to the intrepid French missionary who travelled through Tartary and Tibet, and who devoted the best years of his life to the study of the Chinese; but to our mind the Abbé Huc is not only one of the most charming writers on his subject, but also the man most thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Chinese institutions.

they had laboured for nearly twenty years. His death occurred in A.D. 1085, when he left peaceable possession of his dominions to his son Chetsong. Chintsong had studiously followed the example of his predecessors, and, whatever his orginal inclination for war may have been, he had repressed his martial instincts and given China eighteen more years of undisturbed peace. The Tartars of Leaoutung had made a further advance, and seized the cities which Chitsong of the later Chow dynasty had wrested from them. This accession of territory was far from being unimportant, and instead of solving the frontier question added rather to the growing gravity of the situation.

As Chetsong was only ten years of age, the Empress-mother assumed the functions of government as Regent,* and during her life the country rejoiced in a tranquillity which was the direct consequence of her wise administration. Her virtues were those which commended themselves most to her countrymen, who in their gratitude compared her reign to the semi-mythical period of perfection when Chun and Yao were the patriarchal rulers of a contented people. But even she dared not provoke a war with the Tartars. In A.D. 1090 they restored a few officers and soldiers taken prisoners during previous expeditions, but in turn insisted, under the threat of hostilities in the event of refusal, on the surrender of four fortified towns in the province of Shensi. The threat sufficed,

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* Chetsong's mother, the Princess Tefei, was declared Regent on Chintsong's death.

and the towns were handed over to these insatiable opponents. The same year witnessed floods on a tremendous scale in the provinces of Chekiang and Kiangnan, when it is computed that nearly one million* persons perished. The Regent's death, two years after this calamity, left Chetsong alone to cope with the dangers of his situation on his own resources. There were great questions to be dealt with at home, and the periodical visitations, now of drought and again of floods, were a constant source of anxiety to the ruler and of loss to the people, while on the northern frontier the war-cloud caused by Tartar ambition and military vigour was steadily assuming larger proportions.

His first acts were ill calculated to enlist public confidence. The eunuchs were recalled to the power from which they had been so long banished, and they set themselves to the task of undoing as much as they could of the work the late Empress had accomplished. Under their influence Chetsong divorced his Empress —a step of the greatest gravity in Chinese eyes, and one not to be taken by even an Emperor save when morally justified—and when remonstrated with he replied with indifference that "he was only imitating several of his predecessors." "You would do better," retorted the public censor, "to imitate their virtues and not their faults." He was not to be turned from his purpose, and having deposed one Empress he exalted another of his wives to her place. This

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* More than 800,000.—Mailla, vol. viii. p. 313.

domestic change did not prove auspicious. The infant son of the new Empress, on whom Chetsong's hopes had centred, died soon after her elevation, and Chetsong himself expired of grief at his loss the same year* (A.D. 1100).

His reign of fifteen years had on the whole been peaceful. The incursions of the Hias had been checked, and two victories in the field added an unknown lustre to the Chinese arms; but it is probable that the importance of these successes is exaggerated in the Court chronicles. However, at the least they signify that the border governors were strong enough to maintain peace on the western frontier.

When Chetsong died he had not named an heir after the loss of his son, because, it is naively recorded, "he did not expect to die so soon." The troubles that might have ensued through a disputed succession were averted by the firmness of his widow, who pronounced herself in favour of Chetsong's brother Chaoki, Prince of Twan. Chaoki took the name of Hoeitsong,† and during his reign the troubles, of which the premonitory symptoms had been so long apparent, broke out.

Hoeitsong at first followed in the wake of the

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* A sage presented Chetsong with a small book containing ten precepts as essential for the guidance of a ruler's conduct. They were:—1. Fear Heaven. 2. Love the people. 3. Work to make yourself perfect. 4. Apply yourself to the sciences. 5. Raise wise men to the public service. 6. Listen to the advice which is offered you. 7. Diminish taxation. 8. Moderate the rigour of the law. 9. Avoid pomp. 10. Fly from debauchery.—Pauthier, p. 345.

† Hoeitsong was the eleventh son of Chintsong II.

policy marked out for him by the Empress Mongchi, and the wise minister Hanchong Yen. But he soon wearied of following a set course, for he preferred to indulge his own inclinations. Open to flattery, he was unable to see through the snares of those of his courtiers who praised every trifle that he performed; while his superstition and credulous disposition made him a tool in the hands of the astute personages who were intriguing for the possession of power. With the ingratitude of weak minds he turned upon his benefactress Mongchi, whom he deposed from her proper rank, and he also banished from his Court all the ministers whom he had accepted during the first year of his reign. He gave himself over to the superstitious practices, and to the study of magic, which were condemned in the case of the first Chintsong, and wished that his people should call him by a title signifying "the Emperor who is the master of the law and the prince of doctrine." To this testimony of his infallibility the nation refused to subscribe, and the attempt to force it on his people is only remembered as one of the extravagances of a weak ruler.

Hoeitsong's vanity was in no sense inferior to his incapacity to appreciate the exact character of his position. Surrounded by flatterers who echoed his opinions, he never saw the reality of the dangers which menaced him. He conceived that he had but to command for his orders to be obeyed and carried into execution; and he treated all his neighbours as petty potentates who would never dare to dispute the proposals which he might condescend to

make to them. There was no friend at his elbow, no capable minister, to warn him that his views were erroneous. The enterprise which he desired to undertake was a great and a perilous one, but he entered upon it "with a light heart." It required brave soldiers, skilful generals, and wise ministers to bring it to a happy conclusion. He had none of these; but he trusted to the magic of his name, and inferred from the prognostics of the augurs a speedy and a happy result. It was in obedience not to the promptings of a great ambition, but to the dictates of a petty vanity, that Hoeitsong rushed blindly on his fate.

The Niuche or Chorcha Tartars, who more than a century before had come to settle in China,* had steadily multiplied and gathered to themselves a strength of no ordinary kind. Their seven hordes represented a military power of considerable proportions, which had become subservient to the Leaoutung administration in the time of the great Apaoki. But a large number of them, sooner than surrender their privileges, had withdrawn beyond the reach of the Khitan power into the country which is now Manchuria.† Early in the twelfth century, however, this people had come together again, and the remembrance of their common origin caused them to form a fresh alliance, and one having moreover its foundation in a mutual antipathy to the Khitans of Leaoutung.

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* See *ante*, p. 364.

† The original Niuchin were called Niuchè afterwards by the Chinese. Some French writers speak of them as the Juchi. The Chorchas, or Churchès, may be taken as their more appropriate name. They were the ancestors of the modern Manchus.

Among these there appeared a great warrior, Akouta, who first distinguished himself in battle in the year A.D. 1114 against his Khitan neighbours and the oppressors of his race. Inspired by his first success he led his army from victory to victory, taking many towns and subjecting a large extent of territory. The rapidity of his conquest led him to proclaim himself as Emperor, when he assembled his army in order that it should witness the proclamation of the new government, and the announcement of the name by which he intended it to be known.

Akouta began his address by informing his soldiers that the Khitans had in the earlier days of their success taken the name of Pintiei, meaning the iron of Pinchow, but he went on to say, "Although the iron of Pinchow may be excellent it is liable to rust and can be eaten away. There is nothing save gold which is unchangeable, and which does not destroy itself. Moreover the family of Wangyen, with which I am connected through the chief Hanpou, had always a great fancy for glittering colours such as that of gold, and I am now resolved to take this name as that of my Imperial family. I therefore give it the name of Kin, which signifies gold." In this proclamation (A.D. 1115) is to be found the origin of the Kin dynasty, the rival of the Sungs.

After this ceremony the Tartar king of Leaoutung realised that he would have to fight for the preservation of his kingdom, if not of his independence. The danger which had so suddenly arisen on his frontier had imperceptibly assumed serious proportions, and

threatened his very existence almost before he was aware of the approach of the struggle that was at hand. He then placed a larger army than before in the field—its numbers were computed at nearly three hundred thousand men, of whom the greater portion were cavalry. The Kin army was greatly inferior both in numbers and in the parade of warfare, but Akouta knew that this show of strength was far from being real, and felt confident of victory. The result* justified his anticipations. The immense army raised out of all the provinces from Shensi to Corea was scattered to the winds, and the baggage of the camp became the spoil of the victor. The results of a second victory in the same year were still more striking, and the defeated Khitans fled before the invaders, just

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* The tactics of the Kins appear to have been of a simple kind. They consisted mainly in the skilful manœuvring of their cavalry, in the front ranks of which were placed their best armed men. At first they suffered from a scarcity of proper weapons; but this deficiency was gradually made up by the spoil of repeated victories. The following description of their mode of fighting taken from Mailla may be quoted:—"At first the Niutche had only cavalry. For their sole distinction they made use of a small piece of braid, on which they marked certain signs, and they attached this to both man and horse. Their companies were usually composed of only fifty men each, twenty of whom, clothed in strong cuirasses and armed with swords and short pikes, were placed in the front; and behind these came the remaining thirty, in less weighty armour, and with bows and arrows or javelins for weapons. When they encountered an enemy two men from each company advanced as scouts; and then arranging their troops so as to attack from four sides, they approached the foe at a gentle trot until within a hundred yards of his line. Thereupon charging at full speed they discharged their arrows and javelins, again retiring with the same celerity. This manœuvre they repeat several times until they have thrown the ranks into confusion, when they fall upon them with sword and pike so impetuously that they generally gain the victory."—Vol. viii. p. 379.

as a century later the Kins themselves were to flee before the Mongols of Genghis.

It was not until two years after these events that Hoeitsong received tidings of the disasters which had been inflicted on the Khitan ruler, and of the great falling-off which they entailed in the character of his power. His first thought was to turn them to his own advantage, and in the ambitious schemes which he formed he never entertained the possibility of the Kins proving worse neighbours than the Khitans. He thought the former would be well disposed to play his game, and return to their own solitudes on payment of so many bundles of silk and pounds of silver, leaving him the undisputed possessor of long-lost provinces. On this point he was to be speedily undeceived. The King of Corea* sent an envoy to warn him against the Kins, who were represented to be "worse than wolves and tigers;" but Hoeitsong was not to be turned from the path which he had chosen even by the representations of his best friends.

Akouta received the Chinese Embassy, sent to propose a joint alliance against the Khitans, with all the ceremony due to the Emperor and to the mission with which his representative came charged. Some turn in the war with the Khitans, of which no details have been preserved, induced Akouta to conclude a truce with his enemy, when the advantage of an alliance with the Chinese ruler became less obvious to him. He pretended to take offence at the style of Hoeitsong's

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* A proof in its way of Corea's friendly feeling for the Empire.

letter, and the negotiations were abruptly broken off. The truce between the Kins and the Khitans proved short-lived, and the abortive alliance between the Chinese and Kins on a perfect level of equality was again broached and concluded. Hoeitsong consented to call Akouta the Great Emperor of the Kins, and Akouta agreed for his part to assist the Chinese in obtaining possession of the Yen province, which formed the southern portion of the dominions of the Khitans. Each of the allies was to place a large army in the field, and the Khitans were to be finally crushed as if "between the upper and the nether millstone."

The alliance proved of a nature not conducive to its permanence. The Chinese army was slow to take the field, and when it crossed over into Yen the Khitans met and defeated it in several encounters. The Tartars who had first won Empire under the great Apaoki might have to confess a superior in the hardier kinsmen who, under the name of Kins, were issuing from beyond their northern frontier, but they were still incontestably the superiors as warriors of the Chinese, whom a long peace had rendered effeminate and deprived of generals. When Hoeitsong's commanders sought to retrieve their bad fortune in the following year they were treated still more roughly by Sioua, the Khitan general, and their army was ignominiously expelled from the district they hoped to conquer. The peasants of Yen made jokes and composed ballads about the inexperience of Hoeitsong's lieutenants, and the rude reception they had met with in their country.

Akouta's plans fared better. The Khitan army feared to encounter his, and their king fled before him to the desert of Shamo. A body of fresh troops, sent to his assistance by the Prince of Hia, was intercepted on the march, and severely defeated. The greatness of his own success, and the failure of Hoeitsong's attempt on Yen, led Akouta to place less value on the Chinese alliance, and to indulge hopes of extending his dominion beyond the dominions of the Khitan ruler. Hoeitsong's anxiety to acquire fresh territory was so great that he ignored the sentiment passing through the mind of his Kin ally, and, wishing to obtain as large a share as possible of the spoil, sent an embassy to propose that to the province of Yen, which his armies had failed to conquer, there should be added several neighbouring cities as well. Akouta had no difficulty in exposing the unreasonable nature of this demand, and compelled Hoeitsong to make large concessions in other matters to obtain his consent to an arrangement which he was fully resolved to break at the first favourable opportunity. For the sake of maintaining an appearance of unity in face of the yet unsubdued Khitans the old oaths were re-sworn, and the formalities of a defensive and offensive alliance performed over again.

Akouta then turned with all his energy to the task of finally vanquishing the Khitan king on the one hand, and that prince's victorious general Sioua on the other. The latter enterprise appeared the more difficult and was the first essayed. Meantime the fragments of the two defeated Chinese armies had

been collected and placed under the command of a fresh general, while Akouta detached a large body of his troops to attack the Prince of Yen on the north. Akouta's force was completely successful, while the Chinese troops remained passive spectators of the fray. Sioua and the Regent Princess, lately rejoicing at the repulse of Hoeitsong's armies, saw their hopes shattered like a house of cards at the first contact with the Kins, and were compelled to flee for safety. The province of Yen was thus at last subdued; but it had been conquered by the valour of the Kins, not by that of the Chinese, and Akouta had no intention of resigning his hold upon it.

In the meanwhile Akouta was prosecuting in person the campaign against the unfortunate Khitan king, the descendant of the great Apaoki. With the few troops left at his disposal the latter strove to check the victorious career of his opponent, but bad fortune attended all his measures. The strategy by which he sought to replace the want of numbers and of confidence was foiled, and the loss of his eldest son in battle further disheartened this last scion of a royal race. Despairing of success, he resolved to abstain from further effort, and to take refuge within the dominions of the Prince of Hia; but even there he found no certain shelter from his enemies, and was fain to retire into the desert. During two years he led there a wandering existence, when he had often to go without proper nourishment, and was constantly in fear of his pursuers. In the year A.D. 1125 a detachment of the Kin army took him prisoner, and he

died shortly afterwards of an illness brought on by physical suffering and grief at his misfortunes. With his death the illustrious dynasty of the Khitans or Leaous reached its termination. It had held power from a period fifty years* before the accession of the Sungs to this date, when the hand of destiny was already beckoning to those Chinese rulers although half their course had not yet been run.

The great chief Akouta had not lived to behold the final triumph of his arms. Seized with a violent illness he had died suddenly in A.D. 1123, leaving his Empire to his brother Oukimai. The Chinese themselves praise his extraordinary aptitude for war, and in a not less degree that rare gift, the capacity of judging one's fellows and knowing how best to employ their talents, which carried him to the height of fortune, and rendered it true to say of him that he succeeded with everything which he undertook. In his character may be seen the germ of the great qualities which enabled the Manchus to complete, five hundred years later, the task almost accomplished by their ancestors the Kins.

Meanwhile the much-disputed province of Yen had

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* A.D. 907–1125. "Even in their ashes lived their wonted fires."

A Khitan prince, at the head of the relics of his army and his race, like an Asiatic Æneas, crossed the Gobi Desert, and penetrated into Central Asia, where, after conquering several Mahomedan states, he founded the kingdom of the Kara Khitay (in which name its origin is proclaimed), and assumed the title of Gurkhan. This dynasty endured for 77 years (A.D. 1124–1201), when it was extinguished by Koshluk, the King of the Naimans. The Gurkhan is one of the potentates identified with Prester John. Colonel Yule has shown that that mythical personage was more probably Aung Khan of the Keraits.—See Yule's "Marco Polo."

been placed under the nominal authority of the Emperor by the treachery of one of the Kin governors, but Hoeitsong did not long rejoice in the possession of a province which he had so much coveted. He was obliged to send Oukimai the head of the rebellious governor, and to acquiesce in the re-establishment of Kin authority. Numerous signs were seen in the air predicting a coming change,* and the public mind was much exercised by the doubts and dangers which beset the Sung ruler. The Kins, full of the exultation of victory, demanded the surrender of all the country north of the Hoangho, and their ambassadors warned the Chinese ministers in no uncertain language that they would be conferring a real benefit on the Sung House by complying without delay or useless opposition. There is a wisdom of the highest character in timely concessions, but few distressed potentates have ever recognised it. The Kin troops proceeded to carry out the plan proposed by their ruler, and Hoeitsong bent before the approaching storm. He resigned his place to his son Kintsong, who was to bear the whole brunt of the danger; but even by a cowardly abdication Hoeitsong could not escape all the penalty of the acts of weakness and irresolution which had reduced the state to this helpless condition in the face of a powerful foe.

Kintsong endeavoured by a proffer of friendship to arrest the further advance of the Kin army, but his offers were treated with scorn.

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* These will be found in Mailla, vol. viii. pp. 421–423.

The Chinese troops were defeated in several engagements, and failed to defend the crossing of the Hoangho, where a small body of determined troops could have successfully arrested the advance of a host. The Kin general exclaimed, when he found his men marshalled on the southern bank without having encountered any opposition, that "there could not be a man left in China, for if two thousand men had defended the passage of this river we should never have succeeded in crossing it." The invaders then continued their march on the capital, from which Hoeitsong fled for safety to Nankin, leaving his son to make the best stand he could against the invader. The Kin general Walipou carried everything before him, and menaced the capital Kaifong, but the Kins had not yet determined how far they should prosecute their enterprise against the Sungs. There were many among them who considered that the Hoangho marked the proper limit of their sway. Fresh negotiations ensued, and a treaty was concluded, on the strength of which Hoeitsong returned to Kaifong.

But Walipou himself desired above all things to humble the Sungs by the occupation of their capital, and he refused to abide by the terms of the treaty. Although compelled once to beat a retreat, Walipou returned in greater force, when the armies which Kintsong, encouraged by his previous withdrawal, sent out to meet him were beaten with heavy loss. The Kins then laid close siege to the capital Kaifong. The garrison, mustering in all seventy thousand men, prepared to defend itself to the last extremity, while

fresh troops were ordered from the south. Thirty thousand men arrived from Kwantung, and took up a position near the Tartar camp before Kaifong. There was even some reason for hope that the want of supplies might oblige Walipou to retreat before many months if only the place could hold out for a short period. Such was the view of Prince Kang Wang* and of the braver of the spirits among the Chinese; but his brother Kintsong was altogether in favour of a peaceful settlement and for buying off the national enemy. A successful assault, when the ramparts and gates were captured by the Kins, seemed to justify Kintsong's view, and Kaifong would then have fallen into the hands of the Tartars but that Walipou refused to waste valuable lives in the street fighting for which the Sung generals had made elaborate preparations. Kintsong thereupon proceeded to the Kin camp to arrange the terms of the peace which had become inevitable.

The Tartars, true to their nature, demanded in the first place a large sum of money,† which Kintsong was weak enough to promise, although he well knew that he could not procure it. When Walipou's followers discovered that there was not much likelihood of their obtaining the spoil, which they had probably in their greed already apportioned, there was so loud an outcry that Kintsong was detained a prisoner and prevented returning to his capital. The

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* Afterwards the Emperor Kaotsong.

† Ten millions of small gold nuggets, twenty millions of small silver nuggets, and ten million pieces of silk, says Mailla.

late ruler Hoeitsong, and all the members of the Royal House resident at Kaifong, were induced to seek the shelter of the Tartar camp. They were then conveyed into Tartary, where both Hoeitsong and Kintsong died at long intervals.* The later triumphs of the Kins are undoubtedly to be attributed to the inadequate measures taken by these two Emperors for the defence of their dominions.

Walipou was not satisfied with the plunder of the capital and the carrying-off of almost all the members of the reigning House. He aspired to give China a new dynasty. A creature of the Court was proclaimed Emperor, and enjoyed nominal power while the Kin army was close at hand; but as soon as Walipou retreated he was set aside. The Sung dynasty was restored in the person of Kang Wang, who took the name of Kaotsong, and the condition of the realm reverted to its former footing, with the exception that the Kin state or Empire, as it was justly called, represented a larger and more powerful autocracy than that of the Khitans had been. Henceforth, until their conquest by the Mongols, these two Empires ruled concurrently over China. The Sungs retain in history the exclusive right to the dynastic title, but the Kins continued to represent a more vigorous community, a stronger government, and a greater military power. They would, probably, in course of time have succeeded in extending their authority over the southern as well as the northern

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* The former in A.D. 1135, the latter in A.D. 1160.

provinces which had fallen so rapidly into their grasp but for the sudden growth of the Mongol power under the brilliant leadership of Genghis Khan and his children.

The causes of the decadence of the Sungs and of the inability of these later Emperors to oppose the Tartar hordes and armies are sufficiently clear, if they do not absolutely lie on the surface. "For nearly two hundred years," wrote the Empress to Kang Wang, "the nation appears to have forgotten the art of war,"* and although the virtuous Sungs strove to promote the best interests of the people, they forgot that self-preservation is the first law not only of individuals but of communities. Ruler succeeded ruler who made it his chief object to maintain peace, and the state-policy consisted in paying the necessary price to buy off the danger threatened by the neighbouring tribes. Sometimes a young ruler, new to the practices of the court, and desirous of witnessing the parade of war, would depart from precedent and resolve to subdue turbulent races, or to wrest lost provinces from an alien ruler; but in every case he repented of his freak when brought face to face with the grim reality. He repented the more quickly, indeed, because he speedily found that war is not a game that admits of castle-building with impunity. The long peace had deprived the government of an army; there were no skilful captains; and the magazines were empty. The Sung Empire was a sham in so far that the sword

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* More plainly and also more accurately, "how to fight."

with which its authority could be alone sustained was brittle, and wielded by a nerveless arm.

It is permissible to detect in the peaceful policy* of the Sungs the high state of civilisation which they had attained. Had their neighbours been persons of equally pacific dispositions it is quite possible that the system of buying off inconvenient claims might have continued for an indefinite period; but against Tartar and Turk tribes, lawless marauders and desperate chiefs, it could have but the one result of inflaming instead of satisfying their greed. The Sungs matched their well-known desire for peace, and their skill in that diplomacy of the artful and inferior kind that sometimes has its origin in weakness, and that ever fails to attain its ends, against the ambition, avarice and consciousness of inherent strength of the northern states; and the result was necessarily a failure. To Akouta and Oukimai, or their general Walipou, the subterfuges of the Sungs appeared in the same light that the arguments of the Roman citizens appeared to Brennus the Gaul.

The absence of that military power which, as a matter of fact, the Sungs never possessed in any large degree, but which is the only solid foundation for the maintenance of independence by any government, left Hoeitsong and Kintsong during his brief reign of one year, defenceless in the face of a determined foe. Large armies of men were placed in the field, but throughout these later campaigns not one deed reflect-

* That refers to the period after their first campaigns for the conquest of China.

ing any credit on the arms of China was performed. The incompetence of the eunuchs entrusted with command was rivalled if not surpassed by the cowardice and aversion to battle of the men. With such an army a campaign was really lost before it had begun.

The truth is made more emphatic by the events of this period, that no government can expect to endure which persistently closes its eyes to the first duty it has to perform—the defence of the country or the Empire against an external enemy. It must be prepared to pursue a strong policy, and it must also possess the means to carry it out. It should strive to anticipate and to turn aside or roll back coming dangers, for the first step in retreat when the storm is raging marks the knell of empires. The Sungs failed to see the plain truth, and they fell.

Kang Wang's first act was to order the withdrawal of the capital to Nankin, and, although his qualities were of a higher order than those of most of his predecessors, this retrograde step could only prove, as it did, the beginning of the end of the Sung dynasty.*

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* There can be no doubt that the financial necessities of the Sungs caused a large increase in the issue of paper money from the Imperial mint. Paper money had been introduced as early as the ninth century under the Tangs, and was largely used by both the Kins and Mongols. See a most interesting note on the subject of paper currency in Colonel Yule's "Marco Polo," vol. i. pp. 380–385.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SUNGS AND THE KINS.

Kaotsong.—The Empress Mongchi.—Nankin.—Charioteers.—Criminal Timidity.—Niyamoho.—Tsongtse.—A Defeat.—Chinese Revival.—Rebels.—A Leader of Men.—Bold Advice.—Flight of Emperor.—Abdicates.—Restoration.—His Weakness.—Pursuit of Emperor.—Oukimai.—A Nominee of the Kins.—Kin Triumphs.—Height of Kin Power.—Changtsiun.—Oukiai.—Chinese Victories.—An Ignominious Peace.—Loss of Dignity and Territory.—Hola.—Ticounai.—A Human Monster.—His Armies.—A Khitan Rising.—Outbreak of Fresh War.—A Public-spirited Individual.—Kin Reverses.—The Passage of the Great River.—Mutiny.—Murder of Ticounai.—Oulo.—Hiaotsong.—Peace.—Ylawoua.—Friends of Peace.—Fresh War.—A complete Victory.—Defence of Souchow.—A Traitor Minister.—Kin Victory.—A Divided Control.—The best of the Later Sungs.—A Great Prince.—His Wisdom.—Hia.—A Corean Rebel.—Madacou.—Kwangtsong.—A Weakling.—Decline of the Kins.—Mingtsong's Accession.—Last Kin Successes.—The *Status Quo Ante*.—Advent of the Mongols.

KAOTSONG began his reign at a moment of supreme difficulty. The wave of Tartar invasion had indeed retired beyond the frontier, leaving in its track a devastated region, but at any moment it might return. The Chinese power had never been reduced to a lower

ebb than at this point, and the Kins with two Emperors in their possession might endeavour to attain the climax of their triumph by capturing the third. The crisis required a great mind to grapple with it, and it was doubtful how far Kaotsong would prove equal to the occasion. The bold spirit of the Empress Mongchi alone rose to the gravity of the situation, and her stirring words* cannot but have inspired with fresh courage the young prince on whose capacity and conduct the whole future of southern China depended. The messages sent from their place of imprisonment by his captive father and wife served also to restore his courage if depressed by recent defeat. They exhorted him not to forget that they were held captive in a foreign land, and that they had only him to look to for aid. The greatness of the task entrusted to him should have made Kaotsong equal to the part he had to play, but, as it turned out, the burden proved greater than he could support.

Having proclaimed the general amnesty usual on the occasion of the advent to power of a new ruler, and having removed, as already stated, the capital from Kaifong to Nankin, Kaotsong authorised his minister Likang to take the steps necessary for the raising of a larger army and for the reform of pre-

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* "Although the whole of your august family has been led captive into the countries of the north, none the less does China, which knows your wisdom and fine qualities, preserve towards the Sungs the same affection, fidelity and zeal as in the past. She hopes and expects that you will prove for her what Kwang Vouti was for the Hans. It is for that object that Heaven has preserved you; man has had no part in it."—Mailla, vol. viii. p. 455.

vailing abuses. Great attention was to be paid to the disciplining of the cavalry and to the formation of a special corps* of charioteers; but these reforms never advanced beyond an incipient stage. Likang's tenure of office was of very brief duration. Two months after his elevation he was disgraced, and with him disappeared the reforms which had not been more than fairly commenced. Once Kaotsong made this false step his downward course was rapid. He placed the guidance of affairs in the hands of a few inexperienced courtiers, and resigned himself to their influence. The first use to which they turned their power was to secure the disgrace of Likang, and the next to induce Kaotsong to again change his capital from Nankin to Yangchow,† because the latter was "nearer the sea." Already Kaotsong was more anxious for the preservation of his life than for presenting a bold front to the national enemy.

The Kin general Niyamoho, who had succeeded to all and more than all the influence of Walipou, saw in these changes too favourable an opportunity to be neglected of renewing the enterprise against the Chinese of the south. His armies accordingly took the field in several directions, and had it not been for

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* The chariots of this corps were of a very formidable character. They were placed on four wheels, and held twenty-four combatants, without incommoding them, besides the charioteer. A line of battle, formed by a rank of these small but moveable fortresses, presented an appearance calculated to daunt the foe, at the same time that they afforded a substantial protection to the rest of the army.

† In Kiangsu, on the western side of the Chaho or Imperial Canal, within sight of the Yangtse.

the skill and fortitude shown by Tsongtse, the governor of Kaifong, they would undoubtedly have succeeded in again snatching that great city from the Sungs. In every other direction they were successful, and before the campaign closed, having suffered only one reverse in the field, Niyamoho had the satisfaction of gaining a decided victory over Tsongtse in person. The battle was more stubbornly contested than any recent encounter had been, and it was evident that the Chinese were recovering their martial qualities, while in Tsongtse they possessed a skilful captain. Niyamoho, recognising the valour of his antagonist, withdrew his forces on this occasion, content with having sustained the lustre of his arms, and with having acquired possession of a vast amount of booty and of some important cities.

Encouraged by the state of the Empire, and by the weak conduct of Kaotsong, several rebels appeared in arms, and disturbed large tracts of territory with their presence. The Tartars withdrawn, Tsongtse turned all his attention to the pacification of these troubled districts, and to the restoration of internal peace. The tact and judgment he evinced in this task were not less remarkable than the skill and valour he had shown in war. He had the wisdom to abstain from the rigorous measures usually put in force against rebels, and he won them back to their allegiance by kindness and gentle treatment. On one occasion he excited general admiration by riding with a single attendant into the camp of a rebel, who was so struck by the gallant conduct of the Chinese governor that he then and there

gave in his surrender and promised to serve with his followers against the Tartars. Tsongtse's reputation was greatly increased by these moral triumphs, and when he petitioned the Emperor to return to Kaifong the voice of the nation was unanimous in favour of his request. There was a reasonable chance even at this late period that the Sung power might be revived, as the Kins were regarded with aversion by the peoples whom they had recently subdued. But Kaotsong refused to comply, although Tsongtse sent twenty formal applications to him. He preferred the feeling of safety afforded by the prospect of the junks on the Yangtse from his retreat at Yangchow.* His weakness carried its own penalty, but its immediate consequence was

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* The bold words of Tsongtse might have inspired a more craven spirit than that of Kaotsong with fresh courage. Having dwelt on the fact that all Kaotsong's dearest relatives were in captivity, and that they looked to him for succour, he went on to say, "The western capital, where are the tombs of your ancestors, is in the hands of the enemy, and there are those who do not appear affected by it. The people of the northern provinces, seeing themselves as it were abandoned, desert daily in order to mitigate their misery, and seek an asylum among the barbarians of the north—and no aid is forthcoming for them. The presence of your Majesty can alone reassure them, and raise their zeal. The appearance of affairs is against them, and they seem for that reason to fall short in their duty; but they take to flight in order not to become the slaves of the Tartars, or to place themselves at a distance from the tyranny of certain persons whom your Majesty honours with too much of your confidence. Now that your troops have retaken the western capital, and compelled the Tartars to retire behind the Hoangho, and that the peoples of both Hotong and Hopeh only await the moment when your troops will approach to join them, and that Wangchen and the other rebel chiefs have submitted to your authority, return to your capital to encourage your troops with your presence. There is nothing more to be feared from the Tartars, and never shall we be in a better state than we are now for delivering your august family out of their hands."—Mailla, vol. viii. p. 467.

to cause the death of Tsongtse from an illness aggravated if not produced by chagrin at the failure of his plans.

The death of Tsongtse removed the only obstacle the Tartars recognised to the renewal of their incursions south of the Hoangho. Niyamoho and Olito, the son of the great chief Akouta, took the field with fresh forces and vigour when they heard of the death of the man who had alone rendered doubtful the result of the previous year's campaign. A rapid succession of victories, and the capture of several important places showed that the Emperor had lost in Tsongtse the true guardian of his frontier, and that his troops fought with indifferent courage and success when they had no confidence in their commanders. So quickly did the Tartar Kins advance that Kaotsong felt himself insecure in his palace at Yangchow, and fled across the Yangtse for greater safety. Yangchow fell into the possession of Niyamoho, who fired the palace and then withdrew to carry on his depredations in another quarter.

Kaotsong's flight from his capital had saved him from his external enemies to leave him face to face with the domestic opponents who had long complained of the weakness of his conduct. A mutinous army and discontented officials were scarcely less objects of dread to him than the hordes of the Kins. Personally they were his bitterer foes, for when they had brought about the disgrace and execution of the chief of the eunuchs they refused to rest satisfied with anything short of the abdication of Kaotsong himself.

Kaotsong, deserted by the army, was constrained to submit to the commands of the mutineers, and to retire in favour of his son, an infant only three years old. Within a month of his fall he was, however, restored to power by a revulsion of opinion in his favour among the soldiers.

The first question with which Kaotsong had then to deal was the conclusion of a peace with the Kins, who were again on the point of invading the country. On the first occasion the haughtiness of his ambassador irritated Niyamoho so much that he caused him to be sent into captivity in Tartary, and on the second, when Kaotsong wrote a humble letter imploring peace, the Kin general did not deign to reply. The straits to which Kaotsong was reduced were indeed deplorable, but to narrate them to an enemy could only result in exciting his contempt. Kaotsong recognised in this latter document the supreme power of the Kins, and expressed his willingness to concede everything that was demanded of him.*

The Kins continued their advance, compelling the inhabitants of the conquered districts to shave their heads in token of their subjection—a practice renewed five centuries later by their descendants the Manchus. On their approach Kaotsong fled to the sea-coast, where he embarked for one of the southern ports of China. Even then the Kins continued their pursuit, and a small force took boat to follow Kaotsong to his

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* "Why," he concluded this letter, "fatigue your troops with long and arduous marches when I will grant you of my own will whatever you demand."—Mailla, vol. viii. p. 485.

last retreat. This detachment was compelled however to return, and Kaotsong's personal safety was again assured. While the Sung Emperor was thus fleeing before the Tartars some of his lieutenants were making a brave resistance in other parts of the realm, and had even succeeded in checking their advance. But the balance of victory remained greatly in favour of the northern Power, although one large army was nearly compelled to surrender in attempting to return across the Yangtse.*

Oukimai, the ruler of the Kins, now again endeavoured to force a fresh ruler and dynasty on the Chinese, and a new Emperor, pledged to depend on the Kins for support, was proclaimed. But a doubtful campaign in Shensi, where the Tartars, although victorious, obtained no tangible results and were obliged to withdraw, interfered with the development of this plan. Kaotsong returned to Yueichow in Chekiang, where he was in a position to either advance further or to retire to his former place of safety. The reviving confidence of his soldiers constituted a firmer basis for his authority than he had yet possessed, and when some aspiring rebels appeared in Kiangsi his lieutenants restored order without difficulty. The nominee of the Kins was proclaimed guilty of high treason, and a price was placed upon his head. So long as that puppet-ruler possessed the Kin army at his back he represented a formidable danger for the Sungs;

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* It succeeded, however, by means of row-boats during a calm when the sailing junks of the Chinese could not act."—Mailla, vol. viii. p. 496.

and although the Kins were less keen than they had been after expeditions in the impoverished Chinese provinces, their armies still threatened, and in part occupied, the districts south of the Hoangho.

The indictment of their nominee, and the measures instituted for his capture induced the Kins to place larger armies than before in the field, and this was the more necessary as the Chinese troops showed that they were recovering from their long-standing panic, and as capable commanders had revealed themselves during these later campaigns. Prominent among these were Oukiai and Changtsiun, of whom the former, although of subordinate rank, attained the greater fame. Long descriptions* might be given of the numerous encounters which he fought and brought to a successful issue with the national enemy, of the artifices to which he had recourse for the making-up of deficiency in numbers, of his rapid marches over vast distances, and of the valour he showed on the field of battle. It was to Oukiai in short that the change in the tide of war that now set in was mainly due. The old military superiority of the Kins was no longer undisputed, and Oukimai's lieutenants were met by generals who in tactical knowledge might fairly be considered to hold their own with the best of them.

The campaigns between the years A.D. 1131 and 1134 were of a different character to those that had preceded them. The Chinese were in the main successful, and

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* See Mailla, vol. viii. pp. 501–10.

the Kin invasion was finally checked. The death of their great chief Oukimai in the latter year was also a serious blow to their power. While his generals, Walipou, Niyamoho and Liuche, were winning battles he was engaged not less sedulously in the reform of the internal administration. He was steadily assimilating the customs of his Tartar people to the civilisation of the Chinese, and figured as a patron of literature and art. His reign marks the pinnacle of the Kin power. After his death it began slowly but surely to decline. His successor was his cousin Hola, whose reign witnessed the first appearance and gradual growth of the Mongols ; and the encroachments of these northern tribes proved another inducement to the Kins to abstain from unnecessary wars in the south.

Negotiations for the conclusion of a peace were begun on several occasions but only to be broken off. At one moment Hola offered to restore Honan and Shansi; at the next he announced his intention of conquering Shensi. A treaty was concluded by which Honan was to be restored to the Empire, but the Kin generals refused to evacuate it. The Chinese were successful in the encounters that took place for the purpose of enforcing a settlement of the question, and on one occasion they slew eighty thousand men ; but either through the weakness of Kaotsong or the incapacity of his ministers they obtained none of the fruits of success. Honan remained an appendage of the Kins. The character of the Emperor and the temper of the age may be inferred from the fact that at this crisis

of his reign Kaotsong sanctioned the imprisonment, which of course ended in his murder, of the general who had contributed most to the restoration of his authority. An ignominious peace with the Kins, in the year A.D. 1141, followed, and was a fit conclusion for a period marked by victories that were rendered barren of result and by crimes wrought on the persons of public men. By its terms not only did Kaotsong resign all claim to a vast extent of territory undoubtedly his by right, but he consented to pay annually a large subsidy in silk and money to the Kin ruler.* Kaotsong completed the disgrace of this treaty by accepting the rest of his states as a gift at the hands of the Tartar ruler. The restoration of the body of the dead Emperor Hoeitsong was but a sorry equivalent for so ample a surrender of territory and so grave a loss of dignity.

A few years after this treaty, which was followed by a peace of some duration, the King Hola was murdered by a grandson of Akouta, named Ticounai, who also seized the governing power. He began his reign with a number of diabolical crimes, and when he had satisfied his passions and lust of blood he thought it would be a great deed to break the treaty with the Sungs and renew the war with them. He drew up a

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* The Sung dominions, as defined by this treaty, were as follows :—Two-thirds of Chekiang and the Hoei districts, the whole of Kiangsi, Hounan, Hopeh, Szchuen, Fuhkien, Kwantung, Kwangsi, and four small departments in Shensi. The remainder of Shensi, the whole of Shansi, Shantung and Pechihli, with the northern part of Honan, were to form portion of the Kin Empire. —Mailla.

plan of campaign for the conquest of China in the first place, and of Hia and Corea after that had been accomplished. Two or three years would, he said, suffice for this great enterprise. He forgot how long his predecessors had taken in securing what was nothing more than a partial success. In all his measures he showed equal indifference to the teaching of the past, and not less over-confidence in his own abilities.

Kaotsong's power had been steadily increasing during the long peace which Ticounai was now bent on breaking, and the lessons learnt during a protracted war had been taken to heart and enforced. Ticounai could not conceal the extensive preparations for war that he was engaged in making, and Kaotsong, while desiring the continuance of peace, felt bound to sanction counter precautions. Both sides continued, therefore, their active exertions, and Ticounai boasted that he would place half a million of armed men in the field. But more than half this number was required for effectually guarding the frontier against the Mongols, the Hias and the Coreans. Kaotsong wished to the last to preserve peace and avoid further strife, but Ticounai was resolved that there should be war, and, as he himself protested, he was only seeking a plausible pretext for declaring it.

His attention was in some degree distracted from his relations with the Sungs by a rising within his territory caused by his own acts of tyranny. The chief of one of the clans of those Khitans, who had remained in the country after the fall of their dynasty, had found cause for complaint against this ruler, and his griev-

ance not receiving the redress which he required he broke out into revolt. Ticounai treated this occurrence as a matter of slight importance, but the defeat of one of his generals soon compelled him to see it in a different light. An end was put to his anxiety, however, by the murder of the Khitan chief by his own followers, who were discontented because he had begun his march to join their kinsmen in the west—the Kara Khitay of the kingdom of the Gurkhan. Ticounai did not suffer this episode to turn him from his main purpose, which was war with the Sungs. In A.D. 1161 he accordingly gave orders to his generals to cross the frontier, and the long-expected contest began, after a peace which had endured for twenty years.

The war does not appear to have been very popular with Ticounai's subjects, as many desertions are stated to have taken place before actual fighting commenced. It was no doubt felt to be an unjustifiable war, one commenced without any reasonable provocation, and having no legitimate object in view. If ever a war was criminal that which Ticounai began in so reckless a manner with the Sung ruler must be held to have been so. The wrongful action of the Kin ruler was so palpable that even in that day there were men resolved to mark by some great sacrifice their disapproval of it. Wang Yeouchi, a private individual of Chantung, expended his fortune in fitting out a small corps which rendered valuable and opportune service early in the war; and the great force of public opinion in all the border provinces was strongly in favour of Kaotsong

and against the false and aggressive conduct of the Kin prince.

Ticounai was not to be checked in his design by moral compunctions, and he placed himself at the head of his troops. At first Kaotsong thought of retiring to a place of safety, but a wise minister dissuaded him from this suicidal act. Instead of showing his subjects an example of pusillanimity he then threw aside further hesitation and repaired to the camp of his army. The news of a great sea-fight off the coast, in which his fleet had been completely successful—destroying a large number of the Tartar vessels—produced great rejoicings in his army, full of confidence at the sight of the king in their midst. To Ticounai there came at the same time one piece of bad news after another. His fleet driven from the sea removed an auxiliary in which he had reposed great faith; but this was insignificant in comparison with the intelligence he received from his own state. His iniquities had resulted in the inevitable uprising of the people, and his half-brother Oulo* had been proclaimed in his place, by the mass of his subjects and a portion of his army, Emperor of the Kins. Still Ticounai would not turn aside from the task he had in hand, and thought to crush all his enemies by winning some decisive success over the Chinese army.

Ticounai advanced to the banks of the Great river, driving the Chinese detachments across it. It then

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* Ticounai was the grandson of Akouta by a concubine; Oulo by a wife.

became a question of how he and his troops were to effect the passage. He sacrificed a black horse to Heaven, and he cast a sheep and a cock to the mercy of the waters, but his religion, or credulity, brought him no good fortune. The Sung fleet stood in the path to dispute the passage, and when his war junks sought to engage them they were repulsed with the loss of half their number. In a further engagement they were, practically speaking, annihilated. Ticounai persisted in his resolution to continue the war, although he was in reality helpless on the northern bank of the Yangtse. His army began to murmur in face of the impossible, and numerous petitions were presented to Ticounai by his officers, some suggesting a retreat, others that more time should be allotted to the preliminary preparations. These covert remonstrances excited Ticounai's ire, and roused all the savage in his nature. Executions and bastinadoings became of frequent occurrence in his camp; the soldiers were discontented and the officers embittered against a tyrant whose reckless and undiscriminating temper constituted a danger to all who approached him. A plot was formed against him among his own guards, and his death removed one of those monsters of iniquity whose crimes blacken the age and country in which they happen to have lived.

Having thus summarily solved the difficulty of the passage of the Yangtse, the Kin army concluded a convention with the Chinese and returned northwards to its own country, well content to have escaped from

so dangerous a predicament with little loss, and also to be freed from the tyranny of an unjust ruler. Prince Oulo was generally recognised after Ticounai's death and proclaimed Emperor of the Kins. His first act was to come to an amicable understanding with Kaotsong, thus terminating the ambitious enterprise of his predecessor in an arrangement which seemed to promise better times in the future for these neighbouring states.

The signing of this new peace was the last act of Kaotsong's reign, for he abdicated the throne the same year in favour of his adopted heir Hiaotsong, a young prince,* who was descended from Taitsou the founder of the dynasty. During the long period of thirty-six years Kaotsong had been the nominal ruler of southern China, but his acts had not fulfilled the promise of his youth, when he was the foremost to press brave counsels on his father and elder brother. His natural timidity proved excessive, leaving him an easy tool in the hands of those who worked upon his fears. His reign was marked by many disasters, although it also witnessed a revival of Chinese military efficiency, and concluded with a peace which was more honourable in its terms than any that had up to that point been concluded with the Kins. Kaotsong lived on for a quarter of a century after his abdication, dying in A.D. 1187 at the patriarchal age of eighty-four.

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* Pauthier calls him his nephew, but is probably mistaken, as if his mother had been Kaotsong's sister it would have been recorded.

The Kin ruler Oulo did not obtain undisputed possession of his throne. Ticounai's army joined him to a man, but there was a fresh outbreak on the part of the Khitan tribes under the leadership of Ylawoua, a general of that race in the service of the Kins. Oulo had entrusted to him the task of keeping his own people in order, but Ylawoua became so intoxicated with his success, and the favourable reception accorded him by the Khitans, that he resolved to make himself independent, and caused himself to be proclaimed by the old title of Emperor of the Leaous. Oulo was compelled to send a considerable army against this rebel force before he could rest free from anxiety on its account. Ylawoua's capture and execution relieved Oulo's mind from further apprehension on the score of his Khitan subjects.

Although both Oulo and Hiaotsong desired to maintain the peace so lately concluded, there were those among the Kins who regarded with disfavour the inactivity to which they stood pledged. Shortly after the suppression of the rising under Ylawoua, a powerful faction, including the principal generals, had been formed within the dominions of Oulo for the purpose of provoking a renewal of the war with the Sungs. Their king was emphatically in favour of the preservation of peace, but they trusted to the irrepressible antipathies of two hostile peoples to goad him into war ; and with this object in view they concentrated the garrisons of the frontier provinces, marched the troops victorious over the Khitans into the border districts, and spread abroad the rumour of a coming

war. The Chinese on their side were not slow to meet this display of force with counter demonstrations.

The very year that was to have inaugurated an era of peace beheld therefore the outbreak of a fresh war, in which justice was again on the side of the Chinese. The same generals who had led Kaotsong's armies to victory against Ticounai again assumed the command when Oulo's lieutenants threatened a renewal of hostilities, and their old fortune attended their efforts. In one of the battles the Kins were driven in confusion from the field, leaving eight thousand prisoners in the hands of the Chinese. Hiaotsong wrote with his own hand to Changtsiun, his victorious general, that "there had not been so complete a victory during the last ten years," and the whole nation was loud in its praises of the successful champion. The successful defence of Souchow, by a small corps under the command of an officer named Li Hien Chong against the main army of the Kins, was not less glorious as a feat of arms than the victory just recorded. These successes did not ensure all the results that might have been expected. Negotiations followed, but the interests of the government appear to have been sacrificed by a diplomatist who either did not understand the question or misinterpreted his instructions.* A fresh ambassador was sent to apprise the Tartars

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* His name was Lou Chong Hien. As the case of Chung How, the negotiator of the Treaty of Livadia, in 1879, was somewhat similar, it may be stated that Lou Chong Hien was punished by dismissal from the service, and by being sent into exile, although many clamoured for his death.—Mailla, vol. viii. p. 588.

that no further territory would be surrendered, and no more presents sent in the form of subsidy by the Sung Emperor. Unfortunately Hiaotsong was not wholly convinced of the wisdom of this firm resolve, and losing the moral support of the veteran general Changtsiun, he drifted back to the vacillations of previous years when, for the sake of peace, the Chinese ruler would promise to waive all his pretensions, and surrender his most cherished rights. The Tartars were not slow to perceive the irresolution of their opponent and to turn it to their own advantage. They resumed their advance southwards in A.D. 1161, and, receiving valuable information from one of Hiaotsong's ministers,* whom they had taken into their pay, succeeded in overwhelming a Chinese army. This rude blow made peace an absolute necessity; and Hiaotsong, bowing to the force of events, instructed his ministers to arrange terms without prevarication or delay. As Oulo was an honourable antagonist and ardently desired peace, the terms were more favourable to the Chinese than might have been supposed after their great defeat. It was more remarkable that they proved durable, and that the years following, until the close of Hiaotsong's reign, were peaceful. The minister Weiki, who concluded this treaty, became as much an object of popular applause as his unfortunate predecessor, Lou Chong Hien, had

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* Tang Sse Toui. His guilt was discovered, and he was banished from the Court. His enemies were not satisfied with this punishment, and obtained a decree for his execution, when Tang Sse Toui escaped the executioner by taking poison.

been the mark of public disapprobation. The necessities which beset both the Kins and the Sungs were conducive to the prolongation of this pacific understanding, and after the long wars and the desperate struggle for supremacy which had resulted in a divided control, the people had peace and were at rest.

The remaining years of Hiaotsong's reign were marked by no event of any importance. He showed in his conduct the possession of the virtues which men appreciate and commend, and, freed from the anxiety of war, led an ideal kind of existence in the midst of his courtiers and sages, delivering maxims that were noble in their conception, and endeavouring by example and by deed to remove some of the abuses which had revealed themselves during that long period of confusion and uncertainty when no one felt sure what the day might bring forth. When he had been on the throne for twenty-six years Hiaotsong resolved to abdicate in favour of his third son. He was led to this act partly by his own inclination and partly because the death of the Kin ruler Oulo had seemed to threaten fresh complications with the northern Power. Hiaotsong abdicated in the year A.D. 1189, and died five years afterwards. Of all the Sung Emperors after the change in the capital, Hiaotsong* was probably the best and the most worthy of respect.

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* About this time flourished the celebrated writer Chowhi. His commentaries on the classics are considered masterpieces, and are those in general use. He also wrote a general history of China and other works.

The last years of the Kin Emperor Oulo were scarcely more eventful than those of his contemporary. In A.D. 1170 his vassal the King of Hia or Tangut* had been virtually set aside by an ambitious minister named Gintekin, who, aspiring to the supreme place, had concluded an agreement with his sovereign for the division of his states. It was necessary, however, to obtain Oulo's consent to this arrangement, and when the facts were placed before him he had the sagacity to see through the specious representations of Gintekin, and refused to ratify the convention, because "it must have been forced on the King of Hia." Not content with this Oulo addressed a powerful remonstrance† to the king on the character of his duty to his people, and his arguments opened that personage's eyes so clearly to the guile of Gintekin that he caused him to be arrested and executed.

He gave still more striking proof of the possession of great qualities by the manner in which he received the overtures of a Corean rebel who had repudiated the authority of his prince. This individual, having

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* The connexion was little more than formal.

† "Prince," he wrote, "you ought to regard as a sacred trust the authority which you have received from your ancestors. You have no right to alienate the slightest portion of it. The request you have addressed to me is not of a character to be conceded without mature consideration. I am ignorant alike of the motive and of the principle; and it is for the purpose of being informed on these points that I send the officer who bears this note. Open your heart to him, and discover without prevarication the root of the evil. I charge myself with the responsibility of providing a remedy."—Mailla, vol. viii. p. 597.

wrested the western districts of that kingdom from his liege lord, offered to become the vassal of the Kins, but Oulo replied in the following dignified terms, which were creditable both to his judgment and goodness. "You and your master," he said to the envoy, "deceive yourselves if you believe me to be capable of approving an act of treason, whatever the personal advantage it might procure me. I love all peoples of whatever nation they may be, and I wish to see them at peace with one another. How have you imagined me capable of so mean an act as that you propose to me?" The remaining acts of his reign were connected with the domestic legislation of his people, and with the translation into the Kin tongue of the Chinese classics. His death in A.D. 1189 was a serious loss to his people, who unanimously accorded him the next place after Akouta among the great men of their race. He was the first who showed himself to be something more than a mere soldier, and to perceive the truth of the aphorism that war is only a justifiable necessity as a means to a worthy end. He was succeeded as Emperor of the Kins by his grandson Madacou who preserved during his brief reign the salient features of Oulo's policy.

Hiaotsong's son and successor took the name of Kwangtsong. During his short reign of five years he was Emperor in little more than in name. His wife, the imperious Lichi, asserted her influence over her husband, and exercised more practical authority than he did. The course of events during this reign was

of an uninteresting character, and the attention of the public was monopolised by petty squabbles in the palace and between men of letters. Whether from ill-health or natural timidity and sluggishness is not exactly known, but Kwangtsong soon satisfied his inclination for playing the part of king. In A.D. 1194 he abdicated in favour of his son, and retired into private life, without apparently a single regret at the change in his position.* During this short reign the Kins also enjoyed peace under the rule of their sovereign Madacou.

The new Sung ruler took the name of Ningtsong, and his first task was to restore the administration, so far as he could, to the position it occupied before Kwangtsong's unfortunate reign. It was not until Ningtsong had reigned nearly ten years that he found time to look abroad and see how his neighbours were faring. The spectacle he beheld was encouraging, and seemed to warrant a belief that the Sungs might now recover everything they had lost during long and disastrous wars. The Kin power was shaken to its base, and tottering towards its fall.† The great Mongol Genghis Khan had already struck shrewd blows against its reputation and its strength. Its military vigour was fast becoming a tradition. The army was discontented and ill-paid, and the people retained no

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* Kwangtsong died in the year A.D. 1200 a short time after his wife, the Empress Lichi.

† The wars between the Kins and Mongols will be described in the next two chapters.

affection for an alien government the instant it lost the strength to make itself respected. Something of this untoward result must no doubt be attributed to the shortcomings of Madacou, but it was mainly due to the natural progress of decay in an institution that had attained a height far in excess of its actual strength.

Ningtsong would have been more than human if he had paid no heed to the tales brought him concerning the decadence of the Kins. Having suffered them to obtain a hold on his imagination he allowed himself to drift into a war with his neighbour. Contrary to all expectations the Kins were the victors, and Ningtsong was glad to conclude a peace by the ratification of existing treaties, and by the execution of the minister on whose advice he had declared war. Madacou died shortly after this event, leaving the throne to his cousin Chonghei, a descendant of the great Oukimai. This campaign was fought in the year A.D. 1208, and the last triumph to be obtained over the Sungs cast a parting gleam of glory round the name of the Kin or golden dynasty.

At this point the old rivalry of the Kins and Sungs sinks into insignificance before the advent of the new power of the Mongols. The main feature in Chinese history now becomes the steady growth of the confederacy of the great Genghis, and the petty events of the Sung capital assume an appearance of triviality in face of the great occurrences and startling changes beyond the northern borders. The Kins by reason of their position were the first to feel the effect of the

martial vigour of the Mongol tribes; but the Sungs had eventually to succumb to the same force. Ning-tsong's reign had little more than commenced when this new element asserted itself in the affairs of China.

CHAPTER XX.

THE MONGOLS.

Their Origin.—"The Brave."—Attila and Genghis.—Budantsar.—Kabul.—Visits Kin Capital.—War with Kins.—Kutula.—Yissugei.—Birth of Temujin.—Number of His Tribe.—Mutiny.—Ogelen Eke.—Chamuka.—Temujin's Misfortunes.—The "Cangue."—His Growing Reputation.—Military Force.—Assists Kins.—Rewarded.—Wang Khan.—The Keraits.—The Naimans.—Wang Khan or Temujin?—Defeat of Latter.—His Fortitude.—Change of Fortune.—Flight and Murder of Wang Khan.—The Naiman Chief.—Chamuka.—Hia.—Grand Kuriltai.—Assumes Title of Genghis.—Honours—Muhule.—And Porshu.—Tatakhun.—Seals of Office.—Hia invaded.—Victories on the Hoangho.—Peace with Hia.—Marries King's Daughter.—The Military Power of the Mongols.

THE Mongols* were originally only one small clan among the numerous tribes bordering on the Chinese Empire. They had little to distinguish them from their neighbours in the vast region between the provinces of Pechihli, Shansi, Shensi and Kansuh on the one side, and the great river Amour or Saghalien on the other.

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* See Mailla, vol. ix.; Gaubil's "History of Genghiscan"; Howorth's exhaustive "History of the Mongols"; and Yule's "Marco Polo."

They were all alike shepherds, hunters, and robbers, varying their pursuits with their needs or their whims, and with the season of the year. But for Genghis Khan it is probable that they would never have been anything more than one of the pests of the settled populations within their reach, and even the supreme ability and good fortune of that conqueror failed to make them the dominant power in China. It was reserved for his grandson Kublai to crown the Mongol triumph by the most brilliant of all their successes; but the extraordinary rise of this race to power is not to be lightly dismissed, more especially as it forms a subject of exceptionally varied and striking interest.*

In the strip of territory lying between the Onon and the Kerulon rivers† may be found the cradle of the Mongol race. This retreat, almost impenetrable to outside attack, and containing within itself all the necessaries for a frugal people, was no unfit abode for the ancestors of a race destined to exercise a world-wide sway. When they first issued from their own valleys in the ninth century as a portion of the great horde of the Shiwei they attracted notice by their more than common courage and physical strength, earning either

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* It has been said with considerable truth that Genghis Khan played no part in Chinese history, and that his career, therefore, does not belong to it. It was under his influence and leading that the Mongols rose to power, and in order to explain the fall of the Kin and Sung dynasties, and the origin of the Yuen, it is absolutely necessary to trace the growth of Mongol power. To exclude the figure of Genghis from this period of Chinese history would be like attempting to represent the play of Hamlet without the title character.

† Both being tributaries or upper courses of the Amour.

then, or perhaps in some earlier raid against their neighbours, the title of Mongol or "the brave."* They were included by the Chinese with the rest of the tribute-paying clans beyond the northern confines, and from the ninth to the eleventh century their history presents no point of special interest. Doubtless they were not unrepresented in the ranks of those hordes which troubled the border officials of the Emperor, and which in time produced the various dynasties whose careers have already been described. At some remoter period it is possible that the Mongols were merely a section of the Hiongnou, and Genghis claimed descent from the Royal House of that celebrated people. It is not at all improbable therefore that Attila and Genghis, the two great conquerors specially known as the Scourges of God, came of the same stock, and represented one of those races which had been cast out by the civilisation and millions of China.†

Budantsar was the immediate progenitor of the House of Genghis. He it was who first conquered the district between the Onon and the Kerulon, and who laid the seed of Mongol power. Vested by popular fancy with an abnormal origin, Budantsar consolidated his power by the human means of decision of mind and energy in action, and in the first proclamation

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* This derivation is now generally accepted. It was originally given by the Ordu Prince and historian Ssanang Setzen. See Howorth's "Mongols."

† For this latter speculation the French critics are mainly responsible, but we are very much inclined to go with them. The Mongol legend was that this Royal House came through Tibet from Hindostan. See Howorth's "Mongols," vol. i. p. 32.

he issued to his followers there is perceptible a confidence in himself that augured well for the success of the undertaking he began. "What," said he, "is the use of embarrassing ourselves with wealth? Is not the fate of men decreed by Heaven?" The object he desired to accomplish was not so much the accumulation of riches, by the plunder of cities and the devastation of provinces, as it was the founding of a free and vigorous community. He succeeded in his design, and Budantsar struck the first blow for Mongol greatness, and laid the foundation of its future power deep into the ground.

In the twelfth century Budantsar's descendant Kabul Khan was the recognised chief of the Mongol tribe. It had been foretold to him that his descendants were to exercise Imperial authority, and his attitude towards the Emperor of northern China was apparently dictated by such pretensions. In the year A.D. 1135 we know that he had begun to molest the Kin frontier, and the Emperor Hola had in consequence been compelled to send an army against him. Kabul had, probably in the previous reign, that of the wise Oukimai, visited the Kin capital, where he showed an independence of demeanour that would have led to his condign punishment, but for the forbearance of that ruler. After his return from this visit he showed an increased feeling of bitterness towards the Kins, and Hola had to send his general, Hushahu, to bring him into subjection. The Kin general is supposed to have set out on his expedition in A.D. 1135, but his progress was slow. He suffered much

from scarcity of provisions, and was at length compelled to retreat, from that cause, when the Mongols not only pressed him hard, but inflicted a crushing defeat on his army in the neighbourhood of Hailing. In A.D. 1139 a stronger army was sent against Kabul, but eight years later the war remained undecided. The result had been favourable to the Mongols, who were fast making themselves the heirs of the Kins. They had been joined by several of the neighbouring tribes, and Kabul Khan had refused to accept a lower style at the hands of the Kin authorities than that of Great Emperor of the Mongols.* The surrender of twenty-seven fortified places was a still more expressive testimony to his growing power.

The task commenced by Kabul was worthily continued by his son Kutula or Kublai.† This warrior was long a popular hero among his people, who delighted in the recital of his marvellous deeds. He too won several battles over the Kins, with whom the bitterness of the struggle had been intensified by the capture and execution of some of the members of the Mongol ruling family. His nephew Yissugei may be regarded as his successor; and in his youth Yissugei had learnt the meaning of defeat, when his father and a detachment of the clan had been overwhelmed by a neighbouring and rival people. On this occasion Yissugei had proved himself a good soldier, fighting bravely in the face of superior odds. The war with

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* Tsouyuen-Hoangti. See Mailla, vol. viii. pp. 529 and 545.
† See Mr. Howorth's work.

the Kins went on without cessation during these years, although only scant notice of it has been preserved. It is significant of the character of this new power to find it stated in the Kin history that the Mongols were being joined by many Khitans and Chinese. The Mongol confederacy was always rather a military brotherhood than a national league.

Yissugei warred more with his neighbours than with the Kins; but he is the first Mongol who is recognised by the Chinese as having been wholly independent of either of their rulers. His great successes over the Tartar tribes surrounding him were crowned by the capture of Temujin, one of their principal chiefs. The exact date of this event is in dispute, and it is rendered the more important as having been that also of the birth of Genghis. On Yissugei's return from battle he learnt that his wife* was about to give birth to a son, to whom he gave the name of Temujin, after that of his captive. The little that is known of Yissugei shows that he worthily sustained the reputation of his House, but unquestionably he has no greater title to fame than that of being the father of Genghis Khan.

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* Genghis was probably born in A.D. 1162. It has been placed in A.D. 1154 by Persian writers. Ssanang Setzen says that "one day Yissugei was hunting in company with his brothers, and was following the tracks of a white hare in the snow. They struck upon the track of a waggon, and following it up came to a spot where a woman's yurt was pitched. Then said Yissugei, 'This woman will bear a valiant son.' He discovered that she was the damsel (?) Ogelen Eke (*i.e.*, the mother of nations), and that she was the wife of Yeke Yilatu, a chief of a Tartar tribe. Yissugei carried her off and made her his wife." She became the mother of Genghis.—Howorth's "Mongols," vol. i. p. 46.

Genghis's birth-place is still known by the same name as when he first saw the light there, Dilun Boldak on the banks of the Onon. The authority to which he was the heir was of a limited character. Forty thousand families obeyed the commands of Yissugei, and when he died in A.D. 1175, the young Temujin succeeded to a divided inheritance. The tribesmen despising the youth of Temujin cast off in many cases their allegiance to him, and when he implored them with tears in his eyes to remain true to him, they refused and made a contemptuous reply.* At this crisis his mother, the heroic Ogelen Eke, came boldly forward, and raising the national standard or cow-tailed banner of the Tartars, brought back to their allegiance many of those who were on the point of departing to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Her energy averted the disintegration of the tribe, but Temujin's authority was only recognised by about half the number of warriors who had owned Yissugei as their chief. It became Temujin's first task to retrieve the loss thus inflicted.

His principal enemy at this early stage of his career was Chamuka, the leader of the Juriats, a

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* See a picturesque sketch from Chinese sources of the career of Genghis, in Professor Douglas's "Jenghiz Khan," London, 1877. This incident favours the date given by the Chinese for the birth of Genghis. His followers replied in these taunting words, "The deepest wells are sometimes dry, and the hardest stone is sometimes broken; why should we cling to thee?" We cannot imagine that Genghis at the age of twenty-one would have brooked these taunts, or required his mother to fight his battles for him; and we are therefore doubly justified in assuming that the date given by Chinese writers is the correct one.

neighbouring tribe, and this chief was joined by the Taijuts, who were then ill-disposed towards the Mongols. Chamuka, not content with the assistance of one tribe, appealed to several others to combine for the purpose of crushing Temujin. The young chief was unable to maintain his position against his numerous enemies, and one day he was made prisoner by the Taijuts, who subjected him to several indignities, even, it is affirmed, to that of the "cangue."* He soon effected his escape, and many of his old comrades and relations again rallied round him. His astuteness enabled him to baffle the wiles of his enemy, who sought to recapture him by an invitation to a feast; but his good fortune carried him safely through the danger. Chamuka thereupon appears to have resolved to bring the struggle to an end by attacking Temujin in his own country; but Temujin wisely stood on the defensive, and when the allied army attacked him he drove it back with great loss. This decisive victory raised Temujin's military fame to a high point,† and brought numerous allies

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* The "cangue" is a Chinese mode of punishment. It consists of placing two heavy boards across the shoulders, with an aperture for the neck, and resembles in some degree the stocks of our forefathers. As it allowed movement the punishment was the more severe.

† His mother figures throughout these early adventures as his guardian angel. Her shrewd judgment and ready tact saved him from many a danger and carried him through many a predicament. On this occasion it was she who recommended defensive tactics, and the division of the army into thirteen battalions. From this it may be safely inferred that Temujin's military strength was at this time 13,000 men. The Taijut army was computed at 30,000 strong; its loss at 5,000. See Howorth, *passim*.—Mailla, vol. ix.

to his banner. Temujin's private virtues were exalted in the same breath with his military capacity. "Temujin alone is generous and worthy of ruling a great people," became the general opinion throughout the camping places over the Mongolian steppes.

Already Temujin was aspiring to greater triumphs than any that could be won in his own country. By marriages, and by alliances based on identity of interests, he was bringing his neighbours into communion with himself in order that he might extend his conquests. In A.D. 1194 he assisted the Kin ruler Madacou in an expedition against one of the Taijut clans, and for his good service he received a title of honour and rich presents. The latter excited the cupidity both of Temujin and of his followers, who had never seen such costly articles, and may in the end have contributed to the fall of the government which sent them. Temujin reaped additional profit from this campaign by the plunder of the Taijut tents, and this expedition in conjunction with the lieutenants of the Kins may be considered as the first of his greater and more successful undertakings. Temujin was in the thirty-third year of his age, when for the first time the perception came home to him of the weakness of the greatest of his neighbours.

The chief of the Keraits, a powerful tribe whose territory extended to the Hoangho, had also assisted the Kin Emperor against the troublesome Taijuts, and had received, at the hands of the Chinese, the title of Wang or King. His subjects had subsequently risen against him, and Wang Khan had found shelter

and safety with Temujin. In a few years Wang Khan was reinstated in his authority over the Keraits, through the generous assistance of the Mongol chieftain, and Temujin no doubt flattered himself that he had secured a staunch ally for his further schemes; but human ingratitude is proverbial, and Wang Khan was no exception to the rule.*

In A.D. 1199 Temujin and Wang Khan declared war upon the Naimans, a great people holding the larger portion of Jungaria; but, before the campaign had fairly commenced, the alliance between the Mongol and the Kerait had been weakened by the insidious practices of Chamuka†. Wang Khan then drew off his troops, and Temujin was constrained to retreat. The Kerait chief fared as badly as his treachery deserved, for the Naimans pursued him with vigour, and inflicted great losses upon his force. Indeed it was only Temujin's timely aid that saved him from complete destruction. On several occasions an attempt was made to cement anew this alliance, but Wang Khan, either jealous of the greater fame of his neighbour, or apprehensive of future danger from his ambition, was always half-hearted in his promises of friendship, and not indisposed to array his troops against Temujin whenever it suited his purpose. In A.D. 1202 he took

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* According to Douglas's translation Yissugei had also assisted Wang Khan. The debt of gratitude was therefore the greater.

† He whispered in Wang Khan's ear that Temujin was only a fair weather friend. "You and I," he said, "are like the snowbirds, but your ally is like the wild goose: come cold, come heat, the snowbird is true to the north; but when the winter comes on the wild goose flies off to the south."—Howorth.

a more decided step, and formed a confederacy amongst all the tribes friendly to himself for the purpose of arresting the career of the Mongols. The mask of hollow friendship was at last thrown aside, and the features of bitter hatred clearly revealed. The issue was simply whether Temujin or Wang Khan was to be supreme on the great Mongolian steppe.

The first encounter was disastrous to the arms of Temujin. The hostile armies came into contact at a place, near the modern Ourga, where the mounds over the slain that day are still shown as the record of one of the most famous battles in Mongol history. The impetuosity of the charge of the Mongol horsemen broke the line of Wang Khan's army, and his best troops wavered before the shock. But the odds were all in favour of the Kerait, and Temujin's wearied followers were at last compelled to retreat. After this disaster Temujin was reduced to the lowest straits, and it seemed as if the fruits of many years of wise government, and boldness in the field, were to be lost in a single day. Temujin himself never despaired of the result, and with a chosen band of followers, small in numbers but formidable in their fidelity to their chief, and by reason of their discipline, he continued what seemed an unequal if not a hopeless struggle. In A.D. 1203 he surprised Wang Khan in his camp, and compelled him to take refuge among the Naimans, by whom, in defiance of the laws of hospitality and of the forbearance due to the unfortunate, he was put to death. The consequences of this event were important, as the Kerait people then

became tributary to Temujin, whose authority was thus extended from the Amour to the Kin frontier. To the west there remained the powerful confederacy of the Naimans, hostile and unsubdued.*

Temujin's next task was to settle his future relations with these western neighbours. The Naiman chief was fully resolved to come to conclusions with the Mongols, and Temujin found in him a more formidable antagonist than Wang Khan had been. Both sides were eager for the fray, and the two forces encountered each other on one of those wide plains north of the Tian Shan in the heart of Jungaria. The battle was long and stubbornly contested. The Naimans fought with the utmost resolution, resisting their opponents long after the result of the battle had been virtually decided, and after their chief had been carried covered with wounds out of the press of the combat. The Naimans, and the tribes in alliance with them, were thus subjected, and Temujin's triumph was rendered the more complete by the capture of his old enemy Chamuka.†

It was on his return from this great expedition, when he had accomplished some of the chief objects

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* The Naiman chief in making overtures of alliance to one of the smaller of his neighbours had recognised that his power and that of Temujin were incompatible with each other, and could not long exist together. He truly said, "There cannot be two suns in the sky, two swords in one sheath, two eyes in one eyepit, or two kings in one Empire."—Howorth's "Mongols."

† As Temujin and Chamuka were friends by oath, the former would not stain his hands with his blood; but he handed him over to one of his relatives, who speedily exacted the fullest vengeance that could be wreaked on a family enemy. See Howorth.

of his life, that Temujin resolved to express to the surrounding nations, by some higher title than he had yet assumed, the military power he had formed and consolidated. On his way back from the country of the Naimans he had turned southwards into the kingdom of Hia, which divided with the Kins and Sungs the sovereignty of the Chinese Empire, and with his usual success had defeated the army sent to oppose him. His stay in Hia was on this occasion brief, and having garrisoned two fortified places within its frontier, he returned to his great camping place near the Onon to celebrate the completion of the first portion of the task he had resolved to accomplish.

All the Mongol chiefs were summoned from far and near* to the grand Council or Kuriltai of their race, a banner of nine white yak-tails was placed in the centre of the camp, and on the appointed day the warriors of this race of conquerors assembled round the national ensign to hear the decision of their great leader. It was then proclaimed that Temujin would no longer be content with the minor title of Gur Khan, which had fallen in dignity by the overthrow of so many of the name; but that he would take the style of Genghis† Khan. If we consider the significance of this proclamation by the light of the great

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* This custom was adhered to for several generations—in fact, until the gradual dissolution of the Mongol confederacy. It often resulted in the loss of half-won kingdoms, and sometimes afforded a respite to nations on the verge of extinction.

† Genghis, or any of the numerous other spellings employed by different writers, means Very Mighty Khan. The Chinese translation Chingsze is rendered by Douglas "perfect warrior." Mailla says that it is the reputed sound of the bird of heaven.

events which followed it, and of which it may be considered the direct precursor, it would be difficult to assign greater importance to any other event of a similar kind in the world's history. The assemblage which gathered that day, in the year A.D. 1206, on the spot near which their great chief was born, was called upon to witness the consummation of one great triumph, and the inauguration of a still more brilliant period of military conquest and success. The subjection of the Keraits and Naimans was a very creditable exploit; but it sank into insignificance in comparison with the conquest of China and of the states of Western and Central Asia.

Genghis was too versed in the ways of men to reserve all the honours for himself. Having assumed a title which overshadowed every other, he showered dignities on his followers. Muhule and Porshu, tried friends in many a dire emergency, the companions of his misfortunes and of his hour of triumph, the skilful leaders of armies, were exalted to a position next to himself. The one was made prince on his right side, the other on his left,* for, he said, "It is to you that I owe my Empire. You are and have been to me as the shafts of a carriage or the arms to a man's body." All the subordinate officers, and those who had in any way contributed to his greatness, were rewarded in proportion, and Genghis, on the advice of his Oighur minister Tatakhun, instituted the custom of giving to each of the officials a seal of office. These insignia

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* Douglas's "Jenghiz Khan."

were for the first time distributed on this auspicious occasion. The meeting of all the sections of the race promoted among the people increased confidence in their own strength, and the Mongol chiefs departed to their various posts with a more accurate knowledge of the plans of their great leader. It was clearly foreseen that Genghis had no intention of remaining inactive because all his nomad neighbours had been subdued. He had in his mind a richer and an easier prey than any furnished by the shepherd-warriors of the extensive regions of Mongolia and Jungaria.

In A.D. 1207 he led a fresh expedition into the dominions of the King of Hia, who in a vague way acknowledged himself the vassal of the Kin Emperor, and captured Wuhlahai, one of that ruler's strong places. The fame of this victory brought him the tribute of one section of the Kirghiz tribe, and the repression of a revolt among the Naimans added further to his reputation. In the following year his lieutenants obtained several successes over other tribes along the western portions of the Altai, and Genghis renewed in person his enterprise against Hia. In A.D. 1209 he devoted all his strength to the complete conquest of that state. The Mongol troops, augmented by almost all the desert tribes, flocked from every side towards the Hia frontier. The king of that country placed all his forces in the field, but the prowess of his opponent had unnerved both himself and his people.

In the first battle of this final campaign the eldest

son of the king was defeated, and his best general taken prisoner. The Mongols pressed on to the Hoangho, bearing down all opposition. An attempt to flood the country failed, and the King of Hia, in order to avert a complete overthrow, offered to conclude a peace and friendly alliance. Genghis accepted his proposition and married the king's daughter, thus adding to his own the great military power of this north-western kingdom. By this achievement he not only deprived the Kin Emperor of a powerful ally, but he threatened his country from the west, as well as from the north, through the land of the Keraits. There was no further obstacle in the way of the collision, long expected, between the rising vigour of the Mongols and the waning power of the Kins; and in A.D. 1210, the year after the final humbling of Hia, the war broke out which was to decide the question of supremacy in Northern China.

The Mongols owed their military success to their admirable discipline, and to their close study of the art of war. Their military supremacy arose from their superiority in all essentials as a fighting power to their neighbours. Much of their knowledge was borrowed from China, where the art of disciplining a large army, and manœuvring it in the field, had been brought to a high state of perfection many centuries before the time of Genghis. But the Mongols carried the teaching of the past to a further point than any of the former or contemporary Chinese commanders, indeed than any in the whole world had done; and the revolution which they effected in tactics was not

less remarkable in itself, and did not leave a smaller impression upon the age, than the improvements made in military science by Frederick the Great and Napoleon did in their day. The Mongol played in a large way in Asia the part which the Normans on a smaller scale played in Europe. Although the landmarks of their triumph, have now almost wholly vanished, they were for two centuries the dominant caste in most of the states of Asia.*

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* Much might be said about the military knowledge, the armour, engines of war, &c., of this extraordinary people. The reader curious in these matters will find the details in Mr. Howorth's "History of the Mongols." But we may be excused for pointing out that no writer has given, in words with anything approaching the same effect, a picture of the great "out-pouring" of the Mongols, and of the military triumphs of Genghis, so graphic, brilliant, and impressive, as that contained in Gibbon's immortal "Decline and Fall."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FALL OF THE KINS.

A Kin Embassy.—Chonghei.—Genghis's Attitude.—War.—Decline in Kin Power.—The Great Wall.—Siege of Taitong.—Mongols Checked.—Liuko.—Hushahu.—Utubu.—Hia.—Letter of Genghis.—Massacre of Prisoners.—Change of Capital.—Siege of Yenking.—Brave Defence.—Kaoki.—Great Spoil.—Samuka.—An Arduous March.—Tunkwan.—A Kin Victory.—Invasion of Leaoutung.—Muhule.—His Brilliant Career.—Corea.—Honours to the Brave.—Ningtsong.—Muhule's Death.—Its Consequences.—Return of Genghis from the West.—What He had done There.—War with Hia.—Its Conquest.—The End of a Long Career.—Death of Genghis.—Different Accounts.—His Place in History.—War Goes on.—Ogotai.—Kin Successes.—Siege of Fongsian.—Tuli.—His March Through the Han Country.—His Daring.—Succeeds.—Mongol victories.—Capture of Kaifong.—Subutai.—Yeliu Chutsai's Clemency.—Sungs Attack the Kins in Rear.—Siege of Tsaichau.—Valour of Kins.—Fidelity to their Master.—Ninkiassu Dies as a Brave Man.—The End of the Kins.—Worthy of Respect.

ENCOURAGED by a long succession of victories Genghis turned his arms against the Kins, whose struggle with the Sungs for undivided empire in China had reached a lull through the mutual exhaustion of the combatants. Some years before, when Madacou occupied the northern throne, a Kin ambassador had been received

by Genghis with scant courtesy. This act is attributed to his contempt for the individual, but it probably arose from more complicated sentiments. The ambassador returned to the capital, breathing vengeance against the Mongol, and besought his master to resent the slight cast upon his honour by the outrage thus offered to his representative; but Madacou had sufficient wisdom to refrain from attacking where he saw that he would, probably, be only courting defeat. In a few years Madacou died, and it so happened that his successor Chonghei was the very ambassador whom Genghis had received in this unceremonious fashion.

When the envoy arrived at Genghis's quarters to inform him that there was a new Kin Emperor, the great Khan turned to him and asked the name of the new ruler. On learning who it was Genghis expressed his contempt in the strongest manner,* saying, "I thought that your sovereigns were of the race of the gods; but do you suppose that I am going to do homage to such an imbecile as that?" Chonghei brooded over this second affront, and allowed his personal pique to so far influence his policy that, when an occasion offered, he did not hesitate to assume an active offensive against the Mongols. Genghis would have attacked him with or without an excuse; Chonghei simply went out of his way to supply one. In A.D. 1210, when the Mongol campaign against Hia had been brought to a termination, Chonghei's troops

* "He turned towards the south, and spat upon the ground." —Douglas's "Jenghiz Khan."

attacked and, from the account, apparently defeated a small detachment of Genghis's army. This added fuel to the flame, and war forthwith commenced along the whole frontier.

Genghis did not undertake this great enterprise without due deliberation. Information had been brought him from several quarters of the decline of the Kin power, and the abortive result of the later campaigns against the Sungs had done much towards giving fresh courage to the numerous internal enemies of this alien dynasty. The Khitans were again breaking out into rebellion, and their chief, Yeliu Liuko, concluded a convention for joint action with the Mongol leader. Genghis issued a proclamation to all the tribes of the desert, reminding them of the wrongs they had suffered at the hands of the Kins, and that if they desired vengeance they had only to follow him. The appeal was generally responded to, and Genghis found himself at the head of an army vastly superior in numbers to any that had yet gathered round his banner. It was at this conjuncture that Chonghei's rash act removed whatever chance there may have been of the preservation of peace.

In March, A.D. 1211, Genghis broke up his camp on the banks of the Kerulon, and, leaving a small force of trusty troops to maintain order in his rear, advanced to the Great Wall. That barrier had often before failed to keep out the lawless tribes of the north, and there is little surprising in its having proved unable to arrest the career of Genghis's great host. At the point where Genghis attacked it the custody of this

line of fortification had been entrusted to a local tribe whose chief, far from attempting to defend his charge, surrendered the passage to the Mongols for a sum of money.* The outer defence of the Kins was thus pierced through without the necessity arising for striking a blow. The Mongol army under the command of Genghis, four of his sons and his general, Chepe Noyan, afterwards celebrated above all others in the wars in Western Asia, poured through the opening thus made, and proceeded to lay waste the province of Shansi. The Kin army was some time assembling, and Genghis and his generals were permitted to carry everything before them almost up to the gates of the capital.† When the Kin army did take the field its fortune was only indifferent. Several engagements were fought with disastrous results, although no decisive battle took place. The Mongols overran the northern districts of Pechihli, Shansi, and Shensi, and no doubt secured an immense amount of plunder; but the overthrow of a settled government, even when unpopular, is a much more difficult task than the subjugation of nomad tribes. During nearly two years Genghis remained encamped on Kin territory, but in

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* The tribe was the Ongut, and the Chief's name Alakush. His treachery did not bring him much profit, as he was murdered shortly afterwards by his officers.—Howorth.

† Tungking. A glance at the map will show that Genghis attacked the Kins in a quarter where he was least expected. His advance was made in a straight line from Karakoram through Kuku Khoten and the Ongut country to Taitong, and struck the Kins at their weakest point after the outer barrier was pierced. To give a comparison, it was like an invader of India attacking that country through either Cashmere or Nepaul.

August A.D. 1212, having received a wound before the walls of Taitong or Siking, which resisted all his efforts to storm it or starve it out, he collected his troops and retreated into Mongolia. The success he had met with had been very considerable, but the Kin Emperor was still resolved to defend his independence. It required twenty more years of constant fighting to crush this semi-Chinese potentate. If we contrast the resistance offered by him to the "irresistible" Mongols with that shown by all the western countries from Khwaresm to Hungary and Poland, we shall arrive at a fair idea of the stability and innate strength of a Chinese ruler at this period although China was then almost as a house divided against itself. He had wealth, numbers and reputation at his back, and although slow to adopt new ideas or to sanction necessary changes, he was, even when at his weakest, a formidable opponent for the greatest of conquerors, with inferior resources.

The Khitan insurgent Yeliu Liuko had been equally fortunate. He had defeated the Kin general Houcha sent against him, and, with the aid of a small force lent by Genghis, captured the chief city in Leaoutung. Liuko was then proclaimed King of Leaou, in the capacity of a Mongol vassal.* He chose Hienping as his capital, and rendered opportune service to Genghis two years later by winning a decided victory over the Kin army. We shall see later on that Genghis did not forget, when the occasion offered, to reciprocate

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* Mailla, vol. ix. p. 52.

these timely services rendered against his great enemy.

In A.D. 1213 Genghis returned with the full intention of completing his design ; but the Kins were better prepared, and fought with greater confidence. Under the guidance of a skilful general named Hushahu, they even defeated the Mongols, at the passage of one of the principal canals in Pechihli near the modern Pekin ; but the Mongols succeeded in retrieving this check a few days afterwards, when Hushahu had departed to superintend matters elsewhere. The defeated general, in order to save himself from the death which he knew he had merited, attacked and murdered Hushahu, thus depriving his country of the services of a man who had given some promise of being able to defend it. This year had also witnessed the deposition and murder of the Kin Emperor Chonghei, and the elevation of his brother Utubu to his place, mainly through the influence of Hushahu. When Utubu was informed of the murder of his great general he evinced no regret, and appointed his murderer, the defeated officer Kaoki, to be his successor as commander-in-chief.

As if the danger from the Mongols was not in itself sufficient, the people of Hia, at this moment of anxiety, crossed the frontier, desirous, apparently, of obtaining some share in the spoil of the Kin cities. Genghis also placed fresh troops in the field, and among these were many native Chinese who regarded both Kin, Khitan and Mongol with equal dislike and hostility. Utubu was unable to offer any protracted resistance to the

invaders, who marched almost to the gates of the capital, when Genghis announced that he was willing to retreat on certain conditions. The letter in which the conqueror addressed the Kin prince was couched in the following naive terms, and would seem to show that he possessed a humorous appreciation of the situation. He wrote, "Seeing your wretched condition and my exalted fortune, what may your opinion be now of the will of Heaven with regard to myself? At this moment I am desirous to return to Tartary; but could you allow my soldiers to take their departure without appeasing their anger with presents." Utubu was only too glad to secure the withdrawal of his troublesome guest to barter about the terms. A royal princess was given to Genghis as a wife; five hundred youths, the same number of girls, three thousand horses and a vast quantity of precious articles were also handed over to the victor.* But Genghis did not appreciate these presents, for on his march homewards he stained the reputation his previous successes had obtained for him by the senseless massacre of his prisoners. During this same campaign Genghis had furnished further proof that many of his instincts were only those of the barbarian by causing the old men, women and children whom he had made captives to be placed in the front rank of battle. It is just to mention these unfavourable incidents in Genghis's career lest too favourable a view should be taken of his character. His military virtues

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* Mailla, vol. ix. p. 61.

were incontestable, but the orgy of continuous victory deprived him of the desire to practise moderation, or cultivate the generous instincts which at an earlier stage in his career he had often showed that he possessed.

Utubu's first act after the departure of the enemy was to remove* his capital from Tungking to Kaifong, where he hoped the greater distance from the frontier would bring him increased security; but he had mistaken his opponent. Genghis made this step a point of grievance against him, as he said it showed distrust of his intentions. Utubu had not long taken up his residence in his new capital when the Mongols again crossed the frontier, and renewed their depredations. They were joined by Kanta, one of the Kin generals, at the head of a large army; and his example was followed by many of his colleagues, disgusted by Utubu's pusillanimity in retiring south of the Hoangho. In fact from this time there were constant defections from the ranks of the Kins to those of the conquering Mongols, and as a rule the deserters were welcomed and given employment in the Mongol service.

The first act of this new campaign was the siege of Yenking,† where the prince imperial had been left by his father. Again Utubu's thoughts were of personal matters, rather than of the affairs of the state. He

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* This step was opposed by the majority of his council as unwise. They well knew that, in the East, a government wishing to maintain its power and position must take as one of its mottoes *vestigia nulla retrorsum*.

† The old name of Pekin, meaning the Court of the Yen.

wished to save his son before the Mongols had completed their investment of the place, and in comparison with this object the relief of the garrison or the preservation of the city appeared of small importance. He rejected the advice of those who pointed out what a bad effect the flight of the prince from Yenking would have on public opinion, and ordered his son to leave Yenking and repair to a place of safety. It was another edition of the old tale of the decay of a dynasty and the decline in national spirit. In face of a national danger the monarch thought only of the preservation of his life and of fleeting pleasures; and the people put aside resignation and fortitude as useless virtues, and strove to maintain the privileges of their class by a timely recognition of the power that promised to be triumphant.

Notwithstanding the great discouragement produced by these events the garrison of Yenking defended itself with marked bravery against the Mongols, and had it been promptly succoured it is not improbable that Genghis's army would have failed to capture it. Finding that the defence could no longer be sustained, the governor retired to the ancestral hall of the Kins where he drank the poisoned wine, and his last act was to indite a petition to Utubu for the dismissal of Kaoki, the murderer of Hushahu, and the worst of the state advisers.

The Mongols entered Yenking a few days after the suicide of the governor,* when they put the

* The governor, not the commandant of the troops. The latter refused to fight to the bitter death.

garrison to the sword, plundered the town, and set fire to the palace. An enormous spoil was captured and sent to Genghis, who distributed it among his followers. With much of it he made preparations for fresh wars, and the quantity of arms and military engines seized in its arsenals proved most valuable in his subsequent expeditions. Genghis gave all the credit of this great success to his general Mingan, although much of it was due to the force of circumstances.

Genghis resolved to follow up this blow by a forward movement on all sides, and sent Samuka, one of his most trusted lieutenants, to force a way into Honan. The celebrated Tunkwan* pass connects Shensi and Honan, and Samuka was instructed to capture it if possible. The Kins had not neglected its defences however, and when Samuka saw the strength of this natural fortification, and the number of the garrison, he declined to attack it. Samuka therefore made a detour to avoid so formidable an obstacle, and after a march under incredible difficulties† reached the neighbourhood of Kaifong, where Utubu thought he was in perfect safety. Samuka was nearly paying the price of his temerity. The force under his command had not at the outset been very large, and it had suffered heavy

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* Tunkwan is situated a few miles south of the Hoangho, in Honan (north latitude 34° 38′). It commands the highroad south of the river from Singan to the eastern provinces. Its importance has long departed.

† Mailla says that the road he followed was almost impracticable, and cut up by numerous ravines, across which Samuka threw "bridges made of spears and the branches of trees bound together by strong chains."—Vol. ix. p. 74.

losses during its arduous march. The Kin troops were hastening from all sides for the protection of the capital, and it was only by the rapidity of his movements that Samuka succeeded in regaining the northern side of the Hoangho with the relics of his army. It is doubtful if he would have succeeded in accomplishing this much had it not been that the Hoangho fortunately happened to be frozen that winter. Utubu's pursuit was not of the most vigorous, although this was the first success that had smiled upon his arms since Genghis retired discomfited from before Taitong in the first year of the war.

This victory was not, however, wholly without result, as it so far encouraged Utubu that he sent an army for the recovery of Leaoutung, where Yeliu Liuko had erected a kingdom of his own. For once the Kins were successful, and Liuko was obliged to seek safety in flight. When Genghis heard the news he at once acted with his usual promptitude, and with the generosity he always showed towards a distressed ally. He sent a large army under the command of Muhule, the most famous of all his lieutenants, to drive out the Kins and to restore the Khitan chief who had done something towards promoting the Mongol success in China. Muhule carried everything before him, and recovered possession of the capital by a stratagem not unique in Mongol annals. One of his scouts took prisoner an officer sent by Utubu to encourage and give information to the commander of the garrison, when Muhule at once substituted a Mongol for the Kin, and threw the garrison

off its guard by the favourable news he brought of the state of affairs generally throughout the country. Muhule delivered his attack while the garrison remained wrapped in a false sense of security, and concluded the war by driving the Kin troops out of the whole of Leaoutung. One of the consequences of this campaign was the surrender of the King of Corea, who acknowledged himself a vassal of the Mongols.

In recognition of this brilliant success Genghis conferred fresh honours on Muhule, to whom was entrusted by patent the principal charge of the war in China.* Muhule showed his worthiness for these honours by the brilliant campaign of A.D. 1218–19,† when, having the whole conduct of the war, he invaded Honan, captured numerous cities and defeated the principal Kin general Changju.‡ For the first time during the struggle the conquests made by the Mongols were permanently retained. The authority of the Kin ruler waned daily more and more.

Utubu's difficulties were further complicated by the action of Ningtsong§ the Sung Emperor.

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* Genghis said, "North of the Taihing Mountains I am supreme, but all the region to the south I commend to the care of Muhule." Professor Douglas says, in his work already quoted, that he "also presented him with a chariot and a banner with nine scalops. As he handed him this last emblem of authority, he spoke to his generals, saying, 'Let this banner be an emblem of sovereignty, and let the orders issued from under it be obeyed as my own.'"

† Genghis set out this year on his expedition against the ruler of Khwaresm.

‡ The army with which he accomplished these successes is computed to have not exceeded 30,000 men.

§ See Chapters XIX. and XXII.

Advantage had been taken of the misfortunes of the Kins to repudiate the treaty by which tribute was paid to the northern ruler ; but Utubu had not acquiesced in this repudiation with good grace. Availing himself of a lull in the war with the Mongols, Utubu sent an army across the Sung frontier. He had no better success in this war of offence than he had in that for the defence of his dominions. The Sung general, Mongchin inflicted several defeats upon his army, and the Kins had definitively to waive their old pretensions to superiority. The rapid progress made by Muhule in the north and the ill success of the campaign with the Sungs induced Utubu to propose a suspension of hostilities to the Mongol general; but it was too late. The Mongols had resolved on his complete overthrow. The only terms which Muhule would grant were that the Emperor should resign all his possessions and content himself with the principality of Honan. The Kin Emperor had fallen very low, but he declined to be his own executioner.

In A.D. 1220–21 Muhule continued his measures for the complete subjection of the provinces north of the Hoangho ; but his death in the following year nipped his final plans in the bud. For forty years, as he himself said, he had fought the battles of his master against the Kins and the northern tribes. His only regret was that he had to leave to others the task of finally reducing them. In him Genghis lost his right-hand man, the one general to whom he could entrust the direction of a war. Like Napoleon, he had many faithful and able lieutenants capable of

fighting and winning battles, but Muhule was his best if not his only general, in the highest sense of the word.

The Kins were reduced to such a state of weakness that they were unable to reap any advantage from Muhule's death; and Genghis,* who returned in A.D. 1223 from Western Asia—where he had for four years been engaged in humbling the pride of the great Mahomedan states from Kashgar to Armenia, and from the Jaxartes to the Indus, and in obtaining those brilliant military successes which are still among the marvels of all history—again took the personal direction of the war with the Kins. Utubu's death occurred in the same year as that of Muhule and of the King of Hia. The next Kin ruler was named Ninkiassu, and his first acts were to endeavour to conclude an alliance with the new sovereign of Hia, and to arrange his difficulties with the Sungs.

Although the late king of Hia had long been on good terms with Genghis, and although his troops had on several occasions fought in the same ranks with the Mongols, causes of difference were not wanting between such ill-assorted allies. The Hias thought that in many ways the Mongols had derived greater advantage from their aid either than was politic for them to afford, or than for which they had received any adequate equivalent. Moreover, the resources of this kingdom were very great, and its military strength far from insignificant. The

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† De Guignes has suggested with his shrewd critical acumen that it was the news of Muhule's death which made Genghis return with all haste from the Indian frontier.

young ruler of this state declined, therefore, to continue those offices of civility towards the Mongol in which his father had been prudent enough to acquiesce; and, trusting perhaps too much to the consequences of Muhule's death and to the absence of Genghis, proclaimed his hostility in the clearest manner. Genghis's speedy return spoiled his plans, but he had gone too far to retrace his steps. The year A.D. 1224 was one of inaction on all sides, rendered eventful alone by the death of the Sung Ningtsong*. During these twelve months Genghis was busily engaged in the preparations for an enterprise which he knew would be of more than ordinary moment and danger. In A.D. 1225 he had assembled the largest army he had ever employed in his Chinese wars, and took the field in person when the appearance of spring announced that the season available for active operations had arrived.

Powerful as the Hia state must have been, and confident as its king was in the half million of soldiers which he boasted he could place in the field, the success of the Mongols was rapid and unqualified. The principal cities, the rich centres of trade, the strong fortresses, fell into the hands of the invader; and the young king, who had broken the alliance with Genghis and rushed into this war, died of the grief caused by his numerous misfortunes. In a tremendous battle, fought over the frozen waters of the Hoangho, the army of Hia was almost exterminated; and this terrible day

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* Ningtsong's successor was Litsong. See next chapter.

bears, in many of its features, including its main incident, a striking resemblance to the scene when Napoleon's artillery swept the frozen lake at Eylau. In A.D. 1227 the conquest of Hia was nearly complete; its king* then gave in his formal submission, and recognised the triumph of Genghis.

The conquest of Hia was the last military feat in the life of Genghis Khan. He was not destined to behold the consummation of his long wars with the Kins, although he and his general Muhule had shattered their military power, and laid it level with the ground. It is recorded that his last public act was to refuse peace to the supplications of Ninkiassu, who had begun his reign with an abortive effort to form a league against the Mongols, and whose protestations of friendship Genghis had every reason to distrust. With his latest breath he bequeathed to his successor the task of completing what he was not himself destined to accomplish.

There had been some symptoms that the life of the great conqueror was drawing towards its close.† He had himself felt for some time that the end was not far

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* Leseen, the new ruler and last of the dynasty.

† Signs had been seen, and interpreted by the Mongol soothsayers as meaning that his death was about to happen. The five planets had appeared together in the south-west, and this incident had made so great an impression on Genghis's mind that in the last hours of his life it recurred to him. "My time," he said, "has come. Last winter, when the five planets appeared together in one quarter, was it not to warn me that an end should be put to slaughter, and I neglected to take notice of the admonition? Now let it be proclaimed abroad, wherever our banners wave, that it is my earnest desire that henceforth the lives of our enemies shall not be unnecessarily sacrificed."—Douglas's "Jenghiz."

distant; and in reckoning up the account of his life he detected the one blot in his system—the excessive, and too often wanton, cruelty with which it had been administered. His deathbed injunction to his successors and his people to refrain from the sanguinary sacrifices which he had exacted from enemies was faithfully obeyed, and henceforth the Mongol mode of warfare became not more terrible or vindictive than that of other nations. This last decree is not less important as throwing some light on the character of the man who held the whole of the Asiatic continent in awe by the magnitude of his exploits.

Several stories* have been handed down of the circumstances attending the death of the Mongol hero, but the most probable version is that he died a natural death in his camp on the Shansi frontier, on the 27th of August A.D. 1227.† He was therefore about sixty-five years of age, and during more than fifty of these he had been engaged in conducting wars which partook originally of the character of marauding expeditions, but in the end assumed all the proportions of vast conquests. The area of the undertakings conducted under his eye was more vast, and included a greater number of countries than in the case of any other conqueror. Not a country from the Euxine to the China Sea escaped the tramp of the Mongol horsemen, and, if we include the achievements of his immediate successors, the conquest of Russia, Poland, and

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* Howorth, vol. i. p. 104.

† Marco Polo says he was killed by an arrow; Carpino, by lightning; Haiton, by drowning; &c., &c.

Hungary, the plundering of Bulgaria, Roumania and Bosnia, the final subjection of China and its southern tributaries must be added to complete the tale of Mongol triumph. The sphere of Mongol influence extended beyond this large portion of the earth's surface, just as the consequences of an explosion cannot be restricted to the immediate scene of the disaster. If we may include the remarkable achievements of his descendant Baber* and of that prince's grandson Akbar in India three centuries later, not a country in Asia enjoyed immunity from the effect of their successes. Perhaps the most important result of their great outpouring into Western Asia, which certainly was the arrest of the Mahomedan career in Central Asia, and the diversion of the current of the fanatical propagators of the Prophet's creed against Europe, is not yet as fully recognised as it should be.

The doubt has been already expressed whether the Mongols would ever have risen to higher rank than that of a nomad tribe, but for the appearance of Genghis. Leaving that supposition in the category of other interesting but problematical conjectures, it may be asserted that Genghis represented in their highest forms all the qualities which entitled his race to exercise governing authority. He was, moreover, a military genius of the very first order, and it may be questioned whether either Cæsar or Napoleon can, as commanders, be placed on a par with him.† The

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* The descendant in the twelfth degree of Genghis.

† The Chinese said of him that "he led his armies like a god." —Douglas's "Jenghiz."

manner in which he moved large bodies of men over vast distances without an apparent effort, the judgment he showed in the conduct of several wars in countries far apart from each other, his strategy in unknown regions, always on the alert yet never allowing hesitation or over-caution to interfere with his enterprise, the sieges which he brought to a successful termination, his brilliant victories, a succession of "suns of Austerlitz"—all combined, make up the picture of a career to which Europe can offer nothing that will surpass, if indeed she has anything to bear comparison with, it.

After the lapse of centuries, and in spite of the indifference with which the great figures of Asiatic history have been treated, the name of Genghis preserves its magic spell. It is still a name to conjure with, when recording the great revolutions of a period which beheld the death of the old system in China, and the advent in that country of a newer and more vigorous government, which, slowly acquiring shape in the hands of Kublai, and a more national form under the Mings, has attained the pinnacle of its utility and its strength under the influence of the great Emperors of the Manchu dynasty. But great as is the reputation Genghis has acquired, it is, probably, short of his merits. He is remembered as a relentless and irresistible conqueror, a human scourge ; but he was much more. He was one of the greatest instruments of destiny, one of the most remarkable moulders of the fate of nations to be met with in the history of the world. His name still overshadows

Asia with its fame, and the tribute of our admiration cannot be denied.

The death of Genghis did not interfere with the progress of the war against the Kins. With his dying breath he gave instructions for turning the fortress of Tunkwan, which still effectually guarded the approaches to the province of Honan where the Kins had concentrated their strength for a final effort. His successor Ogotai resolved to prosecute the war with the greatest energy, but a brief period of inaction necessarily ensued, and the Kins availed themselves of it to assume the offensive. In a battle which took place between two small detachments the Kins were victorious, and as this was the first success they had obtained in the field for twenty years its details were greatly exaggerated. Its importance was very trivial, and it had nothing more than a local effect.* In A.D. 1229, when the ceremony attending the proclamation of a new khan was finished, Ogotai announced his intention of concluding the long war by the final overthrow of the Kins; and he showed the decision of his character by dividing the territory already conquered from them into ten departments.

In A.D. 1230, therefore, the Mongols returned in great force, under the command of the brothers Ogotai

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* To the credit of Chinese historians let it be stated that they themselves used a similar expression. The battle, or skirmish—it was little more—was won by a body of 400 adventurers, chiefly Mahomedans. See Mailla, vol. ix. p. 130.

and Tuli, and their generals Yeliu Chutsai and Antchar; but whether it was that they were not led with the same skill as before, or that the Kins after their late victory fought with better heart, their old success apparently deserted them. In several encounters the Kins were successful, and a Mongol envoy who came to offer onerous terms of peace was roughly handled, and sent back with a message of defiance. During that and the following year the Mongols laid close siege to the town of Fongsian, but the garrison defended the place with resolution. The principal conduct of the siege operations was entrusted to Antchar, but the Kins continued to hold out, even after the repulse of an attempt to relieve the town. Antchar was compelled to change his tactics, and to leave a portion of his army to starve the defenders into submission while he overran the surrounding districts. On his return from this expedition he had the satisfaction of receiving the surrender of Fongsian, to the brave garrison of which he granted honourable terms. At the most the success of this campaign had been doubtful; but it had been conducted in a humane manner. The next was to be more decisive, but marked by the recurrence of some of the sanguinary incidents which had attended the previous undertakings of the Mongols.

In A.D. 1232, both Ogotai and Tuli took the active conduct of the war into their own hands. The former attacked Honan—the last of the possessions of the Kins—from the north by way of Hochung, while the latter, at the head of an army composed mainly of

cavalry, marched through the difficult Han country* of Southern Shensi and Northern Szchuen for the purpose of invading Honan from the west. Having overcome almost incredible difficulties, although by the violation of Sung territory, Tuli burst on the Kin garrisons with a fury resembling that of the mountain torrents of the inaccessible region through which he had forced his way; but the Kins recovering from their panic saw that they were only opposed by a handful of men exhausted by a long march under arduous circumstances. A desperate battle ensued near the Yu Mountain,† when the Mongols were obliged to retreat from the field. Their destruction would have been inevitable but that the Kins fancied they had completed their work, and did not follow up this advantage with any vigour. It may have been that the rapid successes of Ogotai on the Hoangho compelled the recall of this army from the south-west for the defence of the capital. When Tuli found that he was not pressed he resumed his march through Honan. The annals of the period are full of the deeds of ferocity he committed—of the thousands he slaughtered among the garrisons he captured and the armies he defeated.

The two armies of Ogotai and Tuli at last joined each other in the neighbourhood of the capital, and the Kin forces were confined to this town and the few other fortresses that remained in their possession.

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* See Yule's "Marco Polo," vol. ii. p. 18. Tuli had to make his own road.

† Twenty-seven miles from Nanyang.

An attempt to flood the country was foiled, and ten thousand labourers sent to break the dykes were massacred to the last man by the infuriated Mongols. In a great battle at Ynchow the Kin army suffered a crushing defeat, losing three of the most trusted of its generals. No further obstacle remained to prevent the siege of the capital. Before Kaifong was completely beleaguered, Ninkiassu, the Kin Emperor, fled with a portion of the garrison to Kouete on the borders of Kiangsu, but his flight only precipitated his fall. The garrison of Kaifong, although disheartened by the desertion of its leader, continued to offer a brave resistance. The Mongol commander Subutai pressed it hard with the fire of numerous catapults, from which were hurled stones of considerable size, and he also employed his prisoners in filling up the ditches of this city-fortress.* The Kins were fighting for their lives, and in their desperation they succeeded for a long time in baffling the superior skill and persistency of the Mongol attack. At one stage in the siege operations Subutai was compelled to withdraw from before the town, but he speedily returned with renewed courage and force. After a siege, which lasted more than twelve months, the garrison of Kaifong reached the limit of its powers of resistance, and was fain to surrender almost at discretion. The spoil obtained by the victors was immense, and it is said that the inhabitants, and those who had

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* Said to have been twelve leagues in circumference. At Kaifong there was a colony of Jews at an early period. See Yule's "Marco Polo," vol. i. p. 309.

taken refuge within its walls, reached the enormous number of fourteen hundred thousand families,* or, at least, seven million persons. Subutai, true to the traditions of Genghis and Tuli,† wished to put them all to the sword, but Yeliu Chutsai, who had already befriended the Chinese on several occasions, interceded with Ogotai, and obtained the rejection of his barbarous proposal.

The surrender of the capital did not deprive the Kins of all their means of defence; and the war continued in a desultory manner until the following year. It might even have gone on for a longer period but for the active intervention of the Sungs, who, in a fatuous spirit of indifference to the dangers that threatened them, assisted with all their power in making the triumph of the Mongols as complete as it could be made. Ninkiassu in his supreme hour of distress had almost discovered a capable commander in Usien, when the Sung general Mongkong crossed the frontier and drove him into the mountains of Mateng. After this the result was no longer in doubt. On one side pressed by the Mongols, and on the other by the Sungs, Ninkiassu and the last of his army retired to Tsaichau, where they were soon closely beleaguered. The siege of this place was rendered famous by the valour shown by the last defenders of fallen royalty. Never did the abilities of the great Mongkong, in after years the mainstay of the Sungs, shine more con-

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* Mailla, vol. ix. p. 188.
† Tuli had died in A.D. 1232.

spicuously; never was the impetuosity of the Mongols more strikingly evinced than on this occasion. But, at the least, the Kins proved themselves worthy of their steel. In the end Ninkiassu, finding all hope in vain, wished to abdicate in favour of a younger kinsman, who might hope to escape the storm then imminent, and renew the struggle under more favourable auspices; but even whilst in the act of performing the ceremony of abdication he was interrupted by the tidings that the stormers were in the heart of the city.

There was no longer any room for hope that the contest could be renewed. It was only left to the last of the Tartar Kins to die with such honour as human instincts truly divine to be praiseworthy. Ninkiassu had fought an up-hill battle, and he had lost it. He fell before an accumulation of dangers and difficulties that were well-nigh irresistible. Unfortunate in his life, and not showing in the face of peril the resolution and firmness that might have been expected from him, he encountered his fate at the last with fortitude. The enemy was at his gate, and a stronger and more daring monarch laid claim to his throne. His army was dispersed, his treasury bankrupt, his people discouraged and in despair. There was no longer any hope of better times, of the revival which sometimes comes when fortune is at its lowest ebb. Ninkiassu had but the choice of two courses, to grace the triumph of his conqueror with his presence and draw out his days in hopeless imprisonment, or to meet death without fear or misgiving. He chose the latter.

When the flames of his palace lit up with a lurid

flame the horizon, the enemy was already master of his last city. Ninkiassu's example was followed by several of his generals and many of his soldiers; and the loyalty of the race gave the Mongols little more than a barren triumph. With Ninkiassu expired, in the year A.D. 1234, the dynasty of the Kins, who had given Northern China nine princes in the course of one hundred and eighteen years. Formidable as the Mongols were as soldiers, brilliant as was the military capacity of their chiefs, and valuable as the aid of the Sungs proved to be, it took them more than a whole generation to conquer the northern provinces of China, and to sweep out of existence an alien dynasty which never secured the sympathy of its subjects. By as much as we regard the Mongols as a formidable people and as a race of born conquerors, by not less should their victims the Kins be respected, because they fought better in defence of their rights than did either the great Mahomedan states of Western Asia, or the principalities of Eastern Europe, when assailed by the same foe.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SUNGS AND THE MONGOLS.

Sung Policy.—Its Result.—Mongkong.—Ningtsong's Reign.—Litsong.—The Province of Honan.—Sung Successes.—Delusive Hopes.—A Kuriltai.—Kutan's Campaign.—Szchuen.—Kaokia.—Doubtful Results.—Ogotai.—Yeliu Chutsai.—Kuyuk.—Karakoram.—Carpino's Narrative.—Kuyuk's Seal.—Mangu.—What is a Man of Letters?—Kublai.—Corea.—Yaochu.—Eight Maxims for a Prince.—Kublai's Moderation.—Narrative of Rubruquis.—Khulagu.—Plan of Campaign.—Yunnan.—The Kincha Kiang.—Uriangkadai.—Mongol Conquests.—Ava.—Kublai's Disgrace.—Yaochu's Advice.—Mangu takes the Field.—Tonquin.—Desperate Fighting.—Hochau.—Death of Mangu.—Mongols retreat.—Two Khakhans.—Arikbuka.—Kublai enters Karakoram.—Chinese Emperor rather than Khakhan.

The Sungs had been induced to ally themselves with the Mongols by the desire to recover some of their lost possessions from the Kins. The intensity of their hatred for the dynasty that had established itself within their frontier blinded them to the dangers that might arise from the new race, that was steadily encroaching southwards and carrying all before it in its career from the north. The Sungs knew nothing of the Mongols, whereas the Kins were their bitterest

enemies. To compass the ruin of the race which had imposed tribute upon him and stripped him of his glory was the fondest wish in the heart of the Sung Emperor. The successes of the Mongols, and the reduction of the Kin garrisons in the south, which became necessary in consequence of the defeats on the northern confines, afforded the ruler of Southern China the long wished-for opportunity of shaking off a thraldom which had always been irksome and hateful to him. That he did not hesitate to avail himself of it is rather to his credit than otherwise; but prudence should have impelled him to abstain from taking any direct step towards promoting the triumph of the Mongols.

When Genghis undertook the conquest of Hia, the Kin ruler despatched an embassy to the Sung capital to ask the Emperor Ningtsong to join with him in opposing the Mongol invasion. The Sungs refused to regard the interests of the two realms as identical, and declined to help their neighbour in distress. The warning of the Kin ambassador that the Kins were beset by the danger to-day, but that to-morrow it would be the turn of the Sungs, fell upon deaf or indifferent ears; and at the tidings of each fresh victory of Mongol arms the native rulers rejoiced in their blindness. It has been seen that they were not content even with the part of gratified spectators. They desired to take a more active and they hoped a more advantageous share in the struggle. So it happened that while Ogotai and Tuli were winning conclusive battles on the Hoangho and the borders of Honan,

Mongkong, the great Sung general, was hastening to give, by his skill and the large army placed under his command, a decisive turn to the struggle. And now the main object had been accomplished. The Kin dynasty had been destroyed,* and of the formidable Niutche race there remained only the relics that had fled to remote Manchuria. Was there any reason to suppose that the Mongols, who throughout their career had been continually removing their neighbours' landmarks, would prove better neighbours to the Sungs than the Kins had been? There could be no question that their military power was much greater, and that their ire was not only more formidable but also more easily aroused.

By the terms of the understanding which had been agreed on for the purposes of war between Mongkong and the Mongol commanders, it was arranged that the province of Honan should be restored to the Sungs when victory had been obtained over the Kins. The required result had now been attained; it remained to be seen whether the accompanying stipulation would be carried out. The very large part which the genius of Mongkong had played in the final overthrow of the Kins has already been referred to, and it would not appear unreasonable to conjecture that the confidence felt by one side in his abilities, and the apprehension on the other of their consequences, were among the

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* D'Ohsson states that Litsong celebrated the victory in a marked manner. Perhaps the most striking incident he mentions was the offering up to his ancestors of the spoils of Ninkiassu.

most prominent causes of the precipitation of a struggle that was in itself inevitable.*

Tokens of the coming storm were not long in revealing themselves. The Mongol troops, instead of evacuating the province, remained in possession of the principal positions ; and if they retreated in any single direction it was done merely for the purpose of drawing their strength to a head. A proposition was then made to divide the spoil, and some steps were taken for the division of the province into two parts, one of which was to remain in the hands of the Mongols and the other in those of the Sungs. As the durability of such an arrangement was palpably impossible it was no longer open to the most obtuse to refuse to see that the Mongols included not one portion, but the whole, of China within their sphere of conquest. Both sides were eager for the contest, and the cause of strife was flagrant and well known to all. It mattered little under these circumstances which side, in the heat of the moment, struck the first blow.

The Chinese were inflated by their successes in the

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* The accession of Ningtsong to the throne, and the events of his first years of power, have been previously described. His reign of thirty years (A.D. 1195–1225) was on the whole peaceful, and few events of any importance occurred beyond those happening on the Kin frontier. He died in A.D. 1225 without leaving any direct descendant, and his distant cousin Litsong was proclaimed Emperor. Litsong had occupied the throne nine years when the crisis in the relations with the Mongols arrived. One of his first acts was to confer upon the chief representative of Confucius the *hereditary* title of Duke, with exemption from all taxation. The title is still in existence, the only one of the kind in China. The main thread of the history is at this point resumed.

recent war, and inclined to underrate the superiority of their late allies. The supreme council was composed of men anxious to obtain fresh fields for their energy and also for their personal advantage; and under their advice Litsong resolved to attempt to seize by force the territory which had been the appendage of his ancestors, and to which he considered he was fully entitled by the solemn stipulations of treaty. The wish being thus formed, the large Sung army on the frontier supplied the ready means of carrying it into execution; and it so happened that the Chinese, having the larger number of troops on the scene, were successful in the earlier engagements. Thus often does Fortune, by an initial success, tempt nations to follow out a reckless enterprise and rush in blind confidence on their fate.

The Mongol commanders were at first singularly inactive, but when the first flush of Sung activity had passed away, and the full danger of the war began to be realised, the Chinese wished to conclude a peace even at the sacrifice of all their claims. The Mongol people had, however, been called into consultation on the subject of the war with the Sungs, and they had decided to prosecute it to the end. From a kuriltai* at Karakoram the fiat had gone forth that the Sungs were to be dealt with in the same manner as the Kins had been. Litsong's passionate appeals for peace received but scant notice from his relentless and terrible opponents.

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* A grand council.

In A.D. 1235 three Mongol armies were raised for the purposes of this war, and to each were entrusted operations that it was hoped would result in the breaking-up of the Sung Empire. While one army, following in the track of Tuli a few years before, crossed over from Shensi into Szchuen, two other bodies of troops invaded Kiangnan and Houkwang.* Ogotai's second son Kutan was placed in command of the first of these, and the campaign principally consisted of the doings of this corps, although it was computed that Ogotai had in all half a million of men in the field. The task which Kutan was required to perform was one of exceptional difficulty, as the northern portion of Szchuen was then and is still a region† presenting great obstacles to the movements of armies, and one where a handful of men might make a stout resistance against vastly superior numbers. Despite a few small reverses the Mongols were generally victorious, and the large garrison, to which had been left the charge of this important province, offered little more than a show of resistance. Much is said in praise of the valour of Kaokia, governor of Mien, who died at his post like a brave man; but neither Mien nor the more important Tsingzeyuen could keep out the Mongols.

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* The former is now, as already stated, Kiangsu and Ganhoei; the latter Hoonan and Hopeh.

† For a description of a portion of this region see Captain Gill's "River of Golden Sand;" London, 1880. Mr. A. Wylie has also described the precise scene of this campaign.

Before the year closed the northern part of Szchuen had been wrested from Litsong, but Kutan and his troops retired as they had come. They were on this occasion only a passing scourge.

Eastwards the Mongol arms were not less fortunate, although on a smaller scale. Kutan's brother Kuchu, Ogotai's third son and acknowledged heir, commenced a career of success which was too soon cut short by his death, leaving to his father the bitterness of a loss not to be replaced. But at the end of a campaign, which had witnessed much bloodshed, the Sungs reoccupied cities that had been sacked, and again took possession of territory depopulated and impoverished by the horrors of war.

The Mongols, true to their traditions, began the conquest of Southern China by a series of expeditions that resembled in their character marauding raids rather than the systematic advance of a great conquering power.

During the remaining years of Ogotai's life little or nothing was done towards furthering the conquest of the Sung Empire. Ogotai took more interest in the progress of the wars in Russia and Hungary, where his nephew Batu was winning victories that will compare as military achievements with any of the most brilliant feats of his House, and his interest was only distracted from them by the growing hold which the pleasures of the table obtained over him. In the great palace that he built at Karakoram he gave himself up to the indulgence of his own inclinations during the last six years of his life,

leaving to Yeliu Chutsai* the task of governing China. Ogotai's death occurred in A.D. 1241, and he left behind him the reputation of being not only a just and able prince, but one whose natural goodness of heart prevented him enforcing the cruel practices of his race.

After a brief interregnum and the happy avoidance of differences and dangers which seemed at one point likely to break out in serious disturbances, Kuyuk, Ogotai's eldest son, was proclaimed Great Khan of the Mongols. It was not until A.D. 1246, five years after the death of Ogotai, that this decision was taken, and that the threatened disruption of Mongol power was averted by the election of a single head. The ceremony made up in splendour for whatever it suffered through the tardy arrangements that had preceded it. All the principal Mongol leaders—Batu, fresh from the passage of the Carpathians, and Argun, Khulagu's

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* The name of Yeliu Chutsai has been mentioned several times. It was chiefly due to his moderation that the Mongols abstained from tyrannising over their Chinese subjects. Under Ogotai he had shown both his sagacity and generosity in advocating the retention of the old mode of taxation in China; and when Turakina, the widow of that ruler, and for a short time regent after his death, farmed out the revenues, Yeliu Chutsai retired in disgust, and died shortly after of grief. Mr. Howorth tells us that his tomb, repaired by the great Keen Lung in A.D. 1757, still exists in the neighbourhood of Pekin. Yeliu Chutsai was certainly the most estimable personage of the age. Père Mailla says of him that "he was distinguished by a rare disinterestedness. Of a very broad intellect, he was able without injustice, and without wronging a single person, to amass vast treasures and to enrich his family; but all his care and labours had for their sole object the advantage and glory of his masters. Wise and calculating in his plans, he did little of which he had any reason to repent." It is only just to add that D'Ohsson states that "his vast treasures" consisted exclusively of books, maps, &c.

most skilful lieutenant—were hastening thither, if not actually present; and many of the conquered princes and tributary kings—Yaroslaf of Russia, and David of Georgia—came to pay in person the token of fealty to the great Khan. But although thus elected with the appearance of unanimity, and with all the pomp* of power, the reign of Kuyuk was far from being a brilliant one. Beyond noticing the issue of a seal expressing, with the arrogance of unfettered authority, his own idea of his position, there is nothing to be said of the second successor of the great Genghis.†

Kuyuk's death, in A.D. 1248, arrested the preparations that had been made for the renewal of the war with the Sungs, who had suffered an irreparable loss in the death of Mongkong, the one general possessing the ability to supply the numerous deficiencies of his countrymen in the art of war. His loss was the more appreciable because his soldiers rated his capacity at a higher value than it may intrinsically have been worth. Under his flag, having learned the first duty of a soldier, they fought with confidence, because they had always found it leading them to victory. His private virtues were on a par with his ability, and his modesty, affability, and single-mindedness endeared

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* The reader is referred to the description of this historic assembly given by the Monk Carpino, who witnessed it on the occasion of his visit to Mongolia for the purpose of "converting the Mongols." He was sent on this mission by the Pope and the Council of Lyons. Carpino's descriptions will be found in tom. iv. of D'Avezac's "Recueil de Voyages et de Memoires;" Paris, 1839.

† The inscription was "God in Heaven, and Kuyuk on earth; by the power of God the ruler of all men."

him to all who came within the range of his influence. The loss of such a man at such a moment was more than Litsong could hope to replace.

Kuyuk was succeeded by his cousin* Mangu, who at once devoted his principal attention to Chinese affairs.† Indeed there was little else except the reform of the finances, which had been thrown into confusion by the recklessness of the regents, to engage his mind, as by this time the western possessions of the Mongols were practically independent of the great Khan's authority, and governed by kings of the House of Genghis. Doubtless the memory of his father's military achievements had much to do with this resolution, and the restless energy of another member of the same family, now about to appear for the first time prominently on the scene of affairs, also contributed to urge the titular head of the Mongols to devote his attention more exclusively to the Chinese question. The genius of Kublai became the spear-head of the energy and persistency of Mangu; and the two brothers took in hand, with a determination ominous for the Sungs, the completion of the conquest of China.

Mangu appointed Kublai his lieutenant, with supreme command of all the forces in China from the

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* The eldest son of Tuli, who distinguished himself in Ogotai's last campaign against the Kins.

† This Khan once asked what was understood by the term "a man of letters." He said, "Are there any others than doctors?" "A man of letters," replied a Chinese servant, "is a man capable of settling all the difficulties which are to be met with in the task of government; and a doctor cannot be compared to him."—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 252.

Corean border to the desert, and southwards as far as the great Kiang. This appointment was made in A.D. 1251, and proved the immediate precursor of the resumption of hostilities with Litsong. Some of the most important offices were given to Chinese, who devoted all their ability to promoting the interests of a government that neglected no opportunity of showing that it knew how to appreciate good and timely service. Kublai himself did still more than utilise in a general way those who had special experience in the country. He attached to his person a Chinese secretary named Yaochu, who became his constant companion and most attached minister. Yaochu had been for some years tutor to the young prince, and it cannot be doubted that many of the most important acts of Kublai's after-career were either inspired by, or, at the least, to be attributed to the teaching of, this enlightened political student. Yaochu* may be justly compared with Yeliu Chutsai, the sage of the preceding generation.

Kublai very soon gave proof of the assiduity with which he intended to devote himself to his duties. The southern districts of Honan had suffered most in the campaigns which had witnessed the expiring effort of the Kins, and the subsequent brief struggle of the Sungs to retain the price of victory. They had, in

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* A studied eulogium on this minister will be found on page 250 of the ninth volume of Mailla's work. Replying to his pupil, he summed up the duties of a prince in the eight following maxims:—"Regulate your household; study the sciences; honour the sages; cherish your parents; revere Heaven; love the people; incline yourself to good deeds; and keep flatterers at a distance."

truth, been turned into a barren solitude whence the people had fled. It became Kublai's first care to restore something of its lost prosperity to this region, and by the guarantee of protection to attract the inhabitants back to their homes. A board of enquiry into, and also for the redress of, grievances was formed, and Kublai's personal supervision prevented its functions being either neglected or becoming a mere form. The result of these measures was advantageous in a double sense. A base nearer the scene of war was obtained for a large army, at the same time that the new rulers secured a stronger hold on the affections of their subjects by advancing some claim to their gratitude. Kublai's popularity increased at a rapid pace; and his brother Mangu* supported him with his cordial assistance.

By these prudent preliminaries Kublai paved the way for the invasion of the country south of the river Kiang. It was not until two years after he commenced his preparations that he was in readiness to commence active operations. The necessity which had arisen for sending an army against the Coreans contributed, no

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* This generation of the family of Genghis was particularly brilliant. Not to refer to Batu, the brothers Mangu, Kublai, Khulagu, the great ruler of Persia, and Arikbuka, Kublai's rival in after years, were four of the most remarkable figures in Mongol history. The Friar Rubruquis, sent by Louis IX. to the Tartars, visited Mangu in A.D. 1253, and gives a most graphic and interesting account of his journey. The narrative of Rubruquis will be found in the same volume of M. D'Avezac's Recueil de Voyages, &c., as that of Carpino already referred to. Colonel Yule, one of our first Oriental critics and geographical authorities, says of Rubruquis's work, that "it has never had justice done it, for it has few superiors in the whole library of travel."—"Marco Polo," vol. i. p. cxxx.

doubt, to increase the delay, but it had been turned to useful account. During this period the Sungs remained inactive behind their frontier, as if fascinated into a state of passiveness at the approach of a danger which, with a true presentiment, they felt they would be unable to resist. Their good behaviour, evinced too late, could retard neither the progress of fate nor the march of the Mongols.

The plan of campaign, which Kublai and his lieutenant Uriangkadai drew up, was marked by originality, and showed that the Mongols were fully resolved to conquer as much by skill and strategy, as by superiority in weapons, and the brute force of numbers. In the extreme south of China, with a people of different race to the rest of the country, lies the province of Yunnan. It has frequently been constituted as a separate kingdom, and at this period was divided into several principalities, independent of each other, and also of the Sung Emperor. Kublai resolved to commence his enterprise by the conquest of Yunnan—a bold scheme, but one which, if it could be successfully carried out, would result in the isolation of the Sungs by the cutting-off of their communications with the west and south.

From Shensi Kublai marched through Szchuen at the head of a large army, divided into three corps, and having rapidly traversed the latter province and successfully crossed the upper course of the Yangtse* on

* Called Kincha Kiang, or River of Golden Sand, in this portion of its course. See the late Mr. T. T. Cooper's "Travels in a Pigtail and Petticoats," as well as Captain Gill's work already mentioned.

rafts, he found himself at his destination in front of the fortified city of Tali. The people of Yunnan were thunderstruck at this sudden invasion of their country by an army that seemed to reck nothing of a march of a thousand miles, and of the passage of great mountain ranges and broad rivers. They could discover no better chance of defence than to shut themselves up in their cities and see whether the tornado would not retire as suddenly as it had arisen. The Mongols had never been deterred in their expeditions by walled cities, and the people of Yunnan soon discovered that their fortifications were of no avail against their assailants. Several of the principal towns, including the capital Tali, were captured; and when some Mongol officers were murdered, Kublai would have exacted a terrible revenge but for the exhortations of Yaochu to punish only the guilty and to spare the innocent. After this decisive success further resistance on the part of the people of Yunnan stopped, and Kublai returned to Shensi, leaving Uriangkadai* in chief command.

After Kublai's departure Uriangkadai carried on operations with great vigour. Surrounded on all sides by independent tribes, and in the midst of a hostile population, he saw that his best chance of safety lay in unceasing activity. His first expedition was against the Toufan or Tibetan tribes, who had attained the zenith of their power some centuries before, and were now rapidly declining, but who had not yet forgotten

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* A son of the great Mongol general Subutai.

all their martial prowess. Having inflicted several defeats upon these turbulent people, Uriangkadai turned his success to greater account by enlisting many of them in his service. He thus increased his small army by the addition of a valuable auxiliary corps, and, flushed with success, turned his arms in the direction of Burmah. The King of Ava and the numerous tribes that then held, and still hold, the fringe of country between China and the northern kingdoms of the Indo-Chinese peninsula were next compelled to recognise the Mongol power, which had now made itself supreme to the south-west of the Sung territory. The bold enterprise conceived by Kublai was thus crowned with the most complete success.

Kublai's return to Shensi had been caused by the growing feeling of jealousy against him at his brother's court. Mangu himself had not been proof against the malign influences of his detractors, and, in A.D. 1257, took the extreme step of removing him from the high posts which he held in China. Kublai had none of the patience under personal injustice which moralists laud, and he gave some signs of an intention to resist with force the decree of the Great Khan. But his Mentor, Yaochu, was fortunately at hand to restrain his ardour, although it required a more than usual effort* on the part of this experienced minister

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* "Prince," said Yaochu, "you are the brother of the Emperor, but you are not the less his subject. You cannot, without committing a crime, question his decisions, and, moreover, if you were to do so, it would only result in placing you in a more dangerous predicament, out of which you could hardly succeed in extricating

to induce him to repress the promptings of his indignation. The term of his disgrace was not to be lengthy, and the blunders of those appointed to his place speedily produced his full justification. They strove to undo everything he had done for the Chinese, but their precipitate and ill-judged action only entailed their complete condemnation.

Kublai went in person to Mangu, protesting his innocence of the ulterior designs with which he had been charged, while each day showed more and more how indispensable he was for the proper administration of affairs in China. Mangu, greatly affected at the sight of his brother, forgave him his imaginary crime and re-instated him in his offices. To give increased importance to the occasion, and at the same time to show that he was resolved to take a more active part in the war, Mangu collected a large army and announced his intention of leading it in person against the Sungs. Kublai was appointed to a command under him, and his next brother Arikbuka was left in charge of Mongolia.*

In the meanwhile Uriangkadai's career of success in Yunnan continued. Tonquin had been added to those states already dependent upon his authority, and an outrage offered to his envoys had been amply avenged

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yourself, as you are so far distant from the capital where your enemies seek to injure you. My advice is that you should send your family to Mangu, and by this step you will justify yourself and remove any suspicions there may be."

* This arrangement of power is important, as Mangu died whilst on the Chinese campaign; and Mangu was the last of the Great Khans exercising an authority which was recognised without dispute by the Mongols in both the East and the West.

in the streets of Kiaochi, the capital. But while the Mongols had been thus successful in the far south, the Chinese had re-entered Szchuen in greater force, and their increased garrisons occupied positions severing the Mongol communication with the army in Yunnan. That army, although victorious over the local levies, could not hope to long resist on its own unaided strength any determined attack on the part of the Sungs. That the Sungs were meditating an attack on Uriangkadai's exposed rear was made sufficiently plain by their increasing activity in Szchuen. If a large Mongol army was not to be left in a dangerous dilemma it was therefore high time for Mangu and his generals to bestir themselves.

Mangu began his march in the winter of A.D. 1257, when the ice still upon the Hoangho enabled his army to cross that barrier without delay. The Mongol army was then divided into three bodies, one to operate in each of the provinces, Shensi, Houkwang, and Kiangnan, while Uriangkadai was ordered to march northwards and, if possible, to join Kublai. The hostile forces were thus converging upon the last of the Chinese kingdoms from four sides. Although there were encounters at the other points the details are only preserved of those which were fought in Szchuen, where Mangu commanded in person; and here the resistance was of a stubborn character. In the neighbourhood of Chentu in particular the struggle was carried on with great bitterness. At one time in the possession of the Mongols, and then retaken by the Sungs, its fate was not finally decided until

Mangu's arrival with the main army, when the Sungs withdrew their forces. Several victories followed, but they were all gained at such heavy cost that the result of the campaign cannot be considered to have been anything more than very dubious. The Sungs fought throughout with bravery against their adverse fortune, and the Mongols progressed at a slow rate. An anxious consultation was held by their commanders at the end of the winter A.D. 1258–59 to decide whether they should return for the summer months to the north, or remain to prosecute the war. It was decided to remain, and active hostilities continued without intermission.

The new campaign began with the siege of Hochau, an important town in Szchuen, which had been entrusted to the charge of a brave and faithful officer named Wangkien. To the Mongol summons to surrender he replied by the arrest of the envoy, thus expressing his resolve to defend the place to the bitter death. The Mongol detachments marched from all quarters to the siege of this important place, and the garrison nerved itself to pass triumphantly through the coming ordeal. While Wangkien held bravely on to his post another Chinese general, Luwenti, endeavoured by all the means in his power to harass the movements of the Mongols; so that Mangu very soon found that the capture of Hochau was a task of unusual difficulty. He might have succeeded in the end, when the garrison's stock of provisions had been exhausted, could he only have maintained his own position outside the walls long enough; but to the

losses in the field were very soon added the ravages of dysentery, the plague of Eastern armies. The siege continued throughout six months, and might have proceeded still further but for the death of the Khan Mangu who fell a victim to this disease.* The Mongol generals at once resolved to retire into Shensi and to abandon for this occasion the attempt to seize Hochau.

Mangu's death, which seemed at first sight calculated to arrest the Mongol campaigns against the Sungs, proved in reality the cause of their speedy and triumphant consummation, by again bringing Kublai to the front as their director. The troubles which immediately followed the death of the Khan Mangu produced a lull in the war, but, as soon as these were temporarily settled, Kublai turned all his attention to the consolidation of his position in the new sphere he had chosen, which was the Chinese Empire, in preference to an authority, weakened in significance, over the disjointed sections of the Mongol people.†

Kublai was Mangu's proper heir, but his younger brother Arikbuka held possession of the centre of power in Mongolia. Arikbuka was also supported by all those who had grudged Kublai his good fortune and who had intrigued against him during the life of Mangu. It was clearly unsafe for Kublai to trust him-

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* There are several versions of the manner in which Mangu met his death. The most probable is that he was carried off by dysentery in two days; but it is also said, with some authority, that he was slain by an arrow. This is only one story out of many.—Mailla, vol. ix. pp. 274–75; Howorth, vol. i. p. 214.

† This decision, not taken until A.D. 1261, was the death-knell of the Sungs.

self within reach of his brother's power, but unless he went to Karakoram to attend the Kuriltai of the nation it was impossible to give validity to his proclamation as Mangu's successor. Kublai took a short road out of the difficulty by holding a council of his chief officers and supporters near Pekin, when he assumed the functions and authority of the Great Khan. Arikbuka and the mass of the Mongols refused to recognise this illegal proceeding, and Arikbuka, with all the necessary formalities and supported by the principal members of his House, took the same title at Karakoram. There can be no doubt that Arikbuka made up for much of the weakness of his claim by the manner of his election and by his popularity among the Mongols.

In A.D. 1261 Kublai marched at the head of a large army upon Karakoram, and, having defeated his brother, made good the superiority of his claims in the most forcible way that is recognised. Arikbuka fled to the Kirghiz, but he soon accepted the generous terms offered him by his brother. He was re-instated in the rank due to a prince of the blood; but Kublai returned to China, whither his tastes urged him, with the fixed determination to conclude the long wars in that country by a final triumph. Discord within the ranks of the Mongols was to break out again at a later period and to cause grave anxiety to Kublai. But it became a matter of secondary importance, for henceforth we have to think of Kublai not as the Great Khan of the Mongols but as the first Emperor of the Yuen dynasty of China.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FALL OF THE SUNGS.

The Passage of the Kiang.—Kublai's First Campaign.—A Truce.—Fresh Outbreak of War.—Kublai's Prudence.—The Lamas.—Pakba Lama.—Corea.—Kublai's Letter.—A Policy of Provocation.—Defection of Chinese Officials.—Kiassetao.—Litsong's Death.—Pekin.—Toutsong.—Sianyang.—Rival Fleets.—Lieouwen Hoan.—A Siege.—A Heroic Deed.—Changkoue and Changchun.—Artillery.—Capture of Sianyang.—Its Consequences.—Bayan.—Death of Toutsong.—The Three Cities.—Siege of Sinhing.—Mongol Victories.—Destruction of Sung Fleet.—Capture of Ouchang.—Flight of Chinese Forces.—Surrender of Towns on the Kiang.—An Army of Defence.—Chichow.—A Heroine.—Bayan's Great Victory.—An Unadopted Plan.—Murder of Mongols.—Chang Chikie.—Szchuen subdued.—Fight on Tungting Lake.—Defeat of Chang Chikie.—The Advance on Hangchow.—Massacre at Changchow.—Surrender of Emperor and Capital.—Later Campaigns.—Fuhkien.—Canton.—Chang Chikie's Fortitude.—Great Naval Victory.—Death of Tiping.—Chang Chikie's Last Effort.—Fall of Sungs.—Their Long Defence.

BEFORE the death of Mangu, Kublai had obtained some minor successes over the Sung forces in the province of Houkwang, and when the tidings reached him he did not withdraw his troops from the positions he had seized on the southern bank of the Yang-tsekiang. The over-confidence of the Sungs in the

impassability of that river had led them to neglect the defences of their towns in its neighbourhood. Kublai turned their mistake to the best possible advantage. The chief credit of forcing the passage of this river appears to have belonged to Tong Wen Ping,* who, having captured some Chinese vessels, filled them with his most determined soldiers and crossed in face of the Sung army. Kublai promptly reinforced this advanced-guard with his main body, when siege was laid to the important city of Wochow,† the capital of the great dual province of Houkwang. The Mongol cavalry carried their raids into the province of Kiangsi, capturing the towns of Liukiang and Chouichow.

But meanwhile the garrison of Wochow held stoutly to its post, although without a commander, and large numbers of troops were fast assembling at Hanyang, the town in the fork formed by the Han and Kiang rivers. Unable to make any impression on the fortifications of Wochow, and apprehensive of the consequences of an abortive assault under the circumstances in which he found himself, Kublai turned a ready ear to the peace proposals sent by Litsong, who was terrified by the appearance of the Mongols in Kiangsi. As a matter of fact the Mongol army, with a very uncertain command of the passage of the river, and

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* One of Kublai's best lieutenants.—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 276.

† The modern Ouchang, opposite Hankow and Hanyang, the three separated by the broad waters of the Yangtsekiang and the Hankiang, forming, if taken together, the largest and most populous city in the world.

surrounded by numerous and rapidly increasing foes, was in a most dangerous position, out of which the panic of the Chinese alone extricated it. If Mongkong had only lived to have the command at this conjuncture Kublai would in all probability never have regained the northern bank of the river he had so adventurously crossed, and the whole fortune of the war might have been changed. But as the event happened, Litsong acknowledged himself a Mongol vassal, paid a large tribute, and forbade his generals to take any offensive steps* against Kublai's army. The Mongols withdrew across the Yangtsekiang, the fame of this expedition and the treaty it produced bringing fresh lustre to their arms. None the less must Kublai's venture against Wochow be pronounced to have been imprudent, and one out of which he came with better fortune than he had any reason to anticipate.

It was fresh from this success—from having made the Sung Emperor a Mongol vassal—that Kublai came to settle the question of supremacy with his brother Arikbuka, and when he returned triumphant from Karakoram the thought that was uppermost in his mind was that nothing short of the annexation of the Sung territory would suffice to satisfy his own ambition, and to meet what he considered to be the political necessities

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* There was one exception to this. Uriangkadai, after the breaking-up of the siege of Hochau, had been ordered to march down the Yangtsekiang to effect a junction with his old chief Kublai. On news reaching him of the treaty with Litsong he made preparations for crossing the river. His rear-guard was attacked while effecting the passage, and a loss of one hundred and seventy men was inflicted upon him. For the time the Mongols "contented themselves with complaints."—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 281.

of the day. Fresh cause of grievance had arisen between the neighbours. The Sungs sought to evade the terms of the treaty, and went so far as to murder the envoys sent by Kublai to announce his proclamation as Great Khan. This conduct further embittered the contest and rendered the preservation of peace impossible.

During this period Kublai had neglected no means for making himself popular with his new subjects, by many of whom he was already regarded with more friendly eyes than any foreign ruler had ever been, and he had greatly strengthened his position in northern China by adopting many native customs and by attaching to his person a chosen band of Chinese advisers. But perhaps the most important step he sanctioned was the personal interest he took in promoting Buddhism, and in gaining over to his interests the powerful class of the lamas. There appears to have been in this age a religious indifference, equal in its way to the political and social decay plainly visible outside the vigorous ranks of the Mongols. The lamas* as a class were alone capable of making a resolute effort for a great and definite object. Sunk to a certain degree in the prevailing apathy, they still possessed cohesion among themselves, and stood apart from the rest of the nation on so many points, that their aid could not but be most useful to any individual knowing how to utilise their services. Kublai took them under his

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* The Mongol name for the Buddhist priests.

patronage and they became his most devoted and trustworthy assistants.

Prominent among these was a young Tibetan, sprung from a family which during more than six centuries had given ministers* to the kings of Tibet; and Kublai, despite his youth, made him the supreme lama, with the title of Pakba Lama. At a later period he sent him back to his own country with seals of office, and under Kublai's patronage he succeeded in making himself not only the chief religious, but the supreme secular authority as well in his own country. This may be considered the first proclamation of a grand Lama, and it arose from the unbiassed conviction of Kublai, who saw in it a step towards the consolidation of his power. It was made the simpler of execution because Uriangkadai had conquered Western Szchuen and the approaches to the valley of the Sanpu. Scarcely less wisdom was shown in the proclamation granting their liberty to all the men of letters who had been taken prisoners by the Mongols during the long wars of this period. The Chinese were shrewd enough to see that Kublai represented the best traditions in their history and that he endeavoured to guide his policy in accordance with them, whereas Litsong was typical only of weakness and decay.

Fresh troubles had arisen with the people of Corea who, ever tenacious of their liberty, refused to abide by the terms of the treaties imposed upon them

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* Mailla, vol. ix. p. 281.

by armies that were irresistible so long as they remained. One king had retired to a small island rather than sign his own disgrace, whilst another, although the friend of Kublai, had been seized with the national fervour, and placed himself at the head of the popular movement. But Kublai, knowing well the danger that always lurks in the despair of a people, resorted to diplomatic means,* to gain his end, and his diplomacy fared as well as the arms of his predecessors. Wangtien, the Corean king, became one of Kublai's firmest friends and allies.

No further task stood in the way of Kublai's commencing the final war with the Sungs, who were reverting to the old policy of provocation, which had never succeeded and never could succeed. Kublai was the last man to tolerate wilful acts of hostility. The attack on Uriangkadai's rear-guard had not been forgotten, and other outrages swelled the bill of indictment against the Chinese. The detention of the

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* The letter he wrote to Wangtien, the Corean king and his former friend, is well worth quotation, if only in part. "The Empire of the Mongols, founded by my grandsire of glorious memory Genghis Khan, has been so widely extended under his successors that it is composed of almost all the kingdoms enclosed between the four seas, and several even of our subjects possess the title of king, for themselves and their descendants, over vast extents of territory. Of all the countries of the earth there is only yours, beside that of the Sungs, which has refused to submit to us. The Chinese regarded their great river the Kiang as a barrier which we should never be able to force, and I have just shown that belief to be a vain hope. They thought that the valour of the troops of Szchuen and Houkwang, joined to their impassable mountains, would preserve those two provinces for them; and, behold, we have beaten them everywhere, and hold their strong places. They are at this moment like fish deprived of water, or as birds in the net."—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 293.

Mongol ambassador and his suite crowned the mistakes of Litsong's government, and in the last year of that ruler's life Kublai issued a proclamation to the generals of his armies "to assemble their troops, to sharpen their swords and their pikes, and to prepare their bows and arrows," for he designed to attack the Chinese in the coming autumn "both by water and by land."* The task was simplified by the defection of some of the principal Sung officers who were disgusted and alarmed at the apathy of their king and the shortcomings of his court.

As if to compensate in a slight degree for these losses to the Sungs, Litan, a Chinese general in Kublai's service, revolted against the Mongols. In Chantung, where he had been entrusted with a post of some responsibility, Litan collected a considerable band of troops and put to the sword the few Mongol detachments in garrison throughout the province. But his reign of independence was short-lived. Kublai sent fresh troops against him, and, after defending himself in his city with the courage of despair, the hour arrived when he was compelled to surrender. Litan's execution served to show intending rebels the futility of an attempt to shake off Mongol authority.

Meanwhile Litsong's long reign was drawing to a close. Unfortunate in the period in which his fate was set he was still more unhappy in the ministers he employed. To Kiassetao, more than to anyone else,

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* Mailla, vol. ix. p. 296.

must the final overthrow of the Sungs be attributed, for it was by his order that the Mongol envoys were retained in confinement. His incapacity was undeniable, but he concealed it by an arrogant bearing that silenced if it did not deceive the world. Those who ventured to give the Emperor advice different to the wishes of this magnate were forthwith exiled to the lagoons of Fuhkien; so that few dared to cross the path of this formidable dictator. In many ways Kiassetao was a worse enemy to Litsong than the Mongols; and Litsong's death must have been a happy release to himself as the clouds were lowering more darkly than ever overhead, after Kublai's announcement of his intention to invade and conquer his territory. Litsong died in A.D. 1264, and his nephew Chowki succeeded him as the Emperor Toutsong.

Several circumstances combined to prevent Kublai, already engaged in the embellishment of Pekin,* from carrying out his plan as soon as he had intended. It is possible that he deferred his attack on the Sung kingdom because he saw that each day it was becoming weaker and less able to resist him. Whether he perceived this or not there is no question of the fact, for as steadily as Kublai's reputation for wisdom and for power grew, that of Toutsong not less perceptibly declined. When Kublai at length issued his final instructions for the campaign, they were based on a plan submitted to him by a renegade general of the Sungs.

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* Or Cambaluc.

He thus availed himself of an experience and a local knowledge which his side had not possessed in the earlier wars. The proposed plan rested on the assumption that the capture of the strong and important city of Sianyang should form the starting point in the conquest of the Sungs. This was held to be not only necessary in a military but justifiable in a moral sense, because it had once been in the possession of the Mongols. Sianyang is still an important town on the southern bank of the Han river in the province of Hopeh. At this period it was strongly fortified, the capital of a well-populated and prosperous district, and it also commanded the main road from the province of Shensi. To the south of Tunkwan it completed, on the western frontier, the defences still left in the possession of the Chinese. Its capture proved to be the difficult task which the importance attached to it by the Sungs might have foretold that it would be. But the advantages that would accrue from its fall had not been exaggerated. Sianyang once captured, the navigation of the Han would be at the mercy of the Mongols who could then devote all their efforts to making their power supreme on the Kiang river itself. When both these objects were accomplished there would be practically an end to the authority of the Sungs.

In A.D. 1268 Kublai's army, computed to consist of sixty thousand veteran troops with a large number of auxiliaries, and commanded by two generals, appeared before the walls of Sianyang. They occupied all the surrounding heights, which they fortified, and their

entrenched camp extended over a line of ten miles. Having cut off all communications by land, they next took steps for intercepting the supplies sent up the Han river by water; and this portion of their task was the more difficult because they had to construct their own war vessels. They set themselves to the work with their usual determination, and in a very short time fifty junks of larger build than those used by the Sungs were equipped and ready to contest the passage of the Han river.

Meanwhile, Lieouwen Hoan, the governor of the two cities of Sianyang and Fanching, which communicated with each other by means of several bridges, was holding out with good cheer, neglecting no precaution to improve his position, and opposing the Mongol attacks with steady and unflinching courage. Confident in the strength of the place—surrounded by thick walls and a deep fosse—in the number of his garrison, and in the copious supply of provisions stored in the granaries, capable, it was said, of meeting all wants "for a period of ten years," Lieouwen Hoan met defiance with defiance, and answered threat by threat. Warned by the Mongols of the fate that awaited an obstinate and vain defence, Lieouwen Hoan retorted by threatening to drag their renegade general in chains into the presence of the master he had abandoned. The bitterness of the struggle developed greater intensity underneath the ramparts of Sianyang.

Although the Mongol army was constantly reinforced by bodies of fresh troops, and notwithstanding that Kublai himself devoted much of his attention to

the subject, the siege of this Sung stronghold made very little progress. Several times were his generals compelled to change their position, to extend their lines at one point and to curtail them at another. But still Lieouwen Hoan's fortitude remained unshaken, and Kublai's lieutenants were baffled on every side. The Mongols succeeded in intercepting and driving back, with considerable loss to the Chinese, a flotilla of store ships; but even this success did not bring them nearer a satisfactory result, because Lieouwen Hoan's supplies were still sufficient for all his wants. The siege was beginning to languish, and seemed about to lose the special interest that had attached to it, when at the very same moment Kublai resolved to press it with greater vigour than ever, and the Sung minister, Kiassetao, came to the determination that it was necessary to do something towards effecting its relief. The main power of the two hostile states was therefore converging, by a common impulse, upon the same point. The siege had already lasted three years, and the events about to be described happened in the year A.D. 1270.

Kiassetao placed a large army in the field, but he entrusted the command to an incapable and inexperienced officer named Fanwenhu. The movements of this force were dilatory, and the timidity of the general did not afford much promise of any vigorous attempt being made to succour Sianyang, and drive away the Mongols. Fortunately there were some braver spirits in the Chinese army than the miserable and pusillanimous personages occupying the highest

places in the realm. Litingchi, the governor of Ganlo, a town south of Sianyang, and also on the Han river, was one of the most determined of these, and he resolved to do something towards helping his colleague Lieouwen Hoan. At this time Fanwenhu's great army was still engaged making its tardy march from the Eastern provinces; but Litingchi, knowing that in war promptitude counts for everything, came to the decision to strike a blow with the small force at his disposal. He collected three thousand men, who devoted themselves to the dangerous but honourable task he proposed to them; and having bade all those depart who did not feel equal to the perilous attempt, he completed his arrangements for throwing into Sianyang this reinforcement, with a large convoy of supplies in which Lieouwen Hoan had informed him that he was deficient.

Several hundred vessels, escorted by this brave band, commanded by Changkoue and Changchun, advanced in two divisions down a tributary of the Han, upon Sianyang. The Mongols had impeded navigation by chains and other barriers; but the Chinese war-junks broke through them and forced their way onwards. The Mongols were apparently surprised, but fighting from their superior positions on the heights above the river, they were recovering the ground they had lost when the division under Changchun, devoting itself to destruction for the attainment of a great end, charged, and kept occupied for some hours the whole Mongol fleet. The store-ships escorted by Changkoue passed safely on to Sianyang, where they

were received with acclamations of profound joy. The relief at this re-opening of communication with the outer world, after a confinement of three years, was intense. In their excitement the garrison forgot the beleaguering foe outside, and threw the gates open as if the Mongols had given up the siege and were in full retreat for their own Northern regions. The iron ring was however still tightly drawn round Sianyang, and the disfigured body of the hero Changchun, found floating past their walls,* reminded them that the Mongols were as formidable as ever, and as resolute to attain their ends. After this successful reinforcement of the garrison the Mongol lines were re-formed, and nearer to the city ramparts. Both Lieouwen Hoan and Changkoue were imprisoned in Sianyang, and the Sungs were too poor in brave men to spare two for the same place. Litingchi was also hovering in the neighbourhood at the head of a lightly equipped force of five thousand men. With so small a body of troops he could attempt nothing serious against the numerous and skilfully placed army of the Mongols.

Changkoue had effected his purpose when he supplied the most pressing wants of Lieouwen Hoan and his garrison. It was no part of his mission to remain in idleness at Sianyang, and after a short rest he prepared to cut his way back through the Mongol force to join Litingchi in some other design for the harassing of Kublai's army. He mustered the companions of his former exploit to raise their courage

* Mailla, vol. ix. p. 326.

anew, by extolling the glory that was already theirs and by pointing out how it might be increased; but whilst addressing them he perceived that one of the band was missing, and immediately comprehended that he had deserted to the Mongols to warn them of the attempt he was about to make. It was not by considerations of personal peril that the Chinese hero was to be turned back from the enterprise he had in view.

During the night he departed in the few war-junks that had escaped the encounter with the Mongols, and, having burst the chains placed across the river, cut his way through the first line of the Mongol fleet. It seemed at one moment as if he had accomplished his object; the straight course of the river showed apparently unguarded before him, and a beaten Mongol squadron lay behind. The morning light gave promise to Changkoue of a safe issue for his daring feat. But it was not to be. In his path stood another fleet, whose ensigns showed that it was part of the Mongol force, and on the banks on either hand were the thousands of Kublai's army in readiness to overwhelm his handful. The odds against him were irresistible. There was no choice between surrender and a hopeless struggle; but Changkoue never hesitated to adopt the nobler part. So long as a ship held together, or as he could find an archer to bend a bow, or a spearman to use his spear, he fought on, and, when he was left the last of all his band, he refused to accept further favour at the hands of the Mongols than his death. Whether in admiration of his conduct, or out of a spirit of refined cruelty, the conqueror sent his body into

Sianyang, where it was received with loud lamentations. The courageous Lieouwen Hoan caused it to be placed beside that of Changchun; and the two heroes, who had been partners in as gallant a feat of arms as any recorded in history, were divided in neither their glory nor their death.*

After this incident the lines of the Mongols were drawn more closely round Sianyang, and greater resolution was shown in pressing the siege. Up to this point the Mongols had devoted their main attention to the city of Sianyang, but henceforth they included Fanching as well. By the advice of Alihaya, one of Kublai's generals, engineers accustomed to the use of machines capable of hurling vast stones with precision† were brought from Persia. With these formidable engines the Mongols succeeded in demolishing many of the chief defences of Sianyang, and in destroying the bridges by which communication was maintained between that town and Fanching. No sooner was this accomplished than the Mongols concentrated all their efforts on the capture of Fanching, and after a prolonged bombardment delivered an assault which, although bravely resisted, proved successful. The garrison fought with the most determined courage and marvellous devotion. The battle raged from street to street, from house to house; and, when there was no longer any possibility of continuing the

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* Mailla, vol. ix. p. 328.

† Catapults or Mangonels. These engines cast shot of the weight of 160 lbs. They were used by Subutai at the siege of Kaifong in A.D. 1232. See *ante*, page 486.

contest, the officers, sooner than surrender, slew themselves, in which they were imitated by their men. The Mongols had indeed captured Fanching, but their triumph was only over a city of ruins and ashes.

With increased fury Alihaya turned all his engines against the ramparts of Sianyang, where Lieouwen Hoan still held bravely out, although the garrison was greatly discouraged by the capture of Fanching, and by succour not arriving from Kiassetao. But Lieouwen Hoan saw that his powers of resistance were almost exhausted, and that unless aid promptly came his soldiers would refuse to continue what could only be a vain defence. Kublai's generals perceiving the temper of the garrison made an offer of generous terms* to Lieouwen Hoan, if he would only yield. After some hesitation these were accepted. Sianyang, having thus held out for four years, surrendered, and Lieouwen Hoan transferred to Kublai the fidelity and courage of which he had shown himself so signally possessed in the service of the Sungs. The indifference shown by Toutsong's government to the fate of this city had disgusted the most faithful followers of his cause,

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* Kublai wrote the following letter to the commandant:—"The generous defence you have made during five years covers you with glory. It is the duty of every faithful subject to serve his prince at the expense of his life; but in the straits to which you are reduced, your strength exhausted, deprived of succour, and without hope of receiving any, would it be reasonable to sacrifice the lives of so many brave men out of sheer obstinacy? Submit in good faith to us, and no harm shall come to you. We promise you still more; and that is to provide each and all of you with honourable employment. You shall have no grounds for discontent, for that we pledge you our Imperial word."—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 332.

and injured the Sung reputation quite as much as it was by the actual loss of this double fortress.

Little as had been done for the relief of Sianyang its loss was felt by all to be a great blow to the native dynasty that still governed the southern provinces of China. When Kiassetao announced its capture to Toutsong it seemed for a moment as if something of the old spirit of the royal race would re-assert itself, and it required the exercise of all the minister's personal ascendancy to stifle Toutsong's first inclination to take a summary revenge on the real author of the disaster. Kiassetao's apathy and self-seeking policy had been the true causes of the surrender of Sianyang, and Toutsong's eyes were at last opened to his enormities. But the ruler lacked the moral courage to grapple with the difficulty, and to treat the traitor according to his deserts. He found it more congenial to his tastes to withdraw into the interior of his palace, and to pass his time in midnight debauchery. Toutsong appears to have felt deeply the degradation to which he was reduced, and sought forgetfulness in the wine-cup. His excesses, aggravated by the increasing anxiety and danger of his position, soon put an end to his existence, and the crown of the Sungs was placed, by Kiassetao's direction, on the head of his second son, a child named Chaohien (A.D. 1274).

The capture of Sianyang was the greatest encouragement to the Mongols, and the strongest possible inducement to Kublai to devote all his energy to the attainment of the conclusion of a war towards which his

father had, forty years before, contributed so much in its earliest stages. Toutsong's death and the accession of a child prince, who could be nothing more than a tool in the hands of the incapable Kiassetao, were additional reasons in favour of the prompt and vigorous action upon which Kublai had at last decided. If there was wanted another inducement it was furnished by the fact that in Bayan* the greatest general of the age was available for the conduct of the war. Toutsong's death far, therefore, from arresting Kublai's military preparations had the effect of hurrying them on. The hour had come to strike home, and nothing of advantage could be obtained by delay.

Bayan's apprenticeship in the service of arms had been passed in the campaigns in Persia, where Khulagu had won great fame and founded a dynasty of kings. The opportunity now offered itself on another field of turning to account the military knowledge he had acquired in Western warfare. The army with which Kublai entrusted him was the larger of the two placed in the field. While one force marched into Kiangnan, the other under Bayan, assisted by three trusty and experienced lieutenants,† advanced against Houkwang. In the path of each lay the same obstacle, the broad waters of the river Yangtsekiang, but even north of that stream the Mongol advance was not unresisted.

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* For an account of the career of this general see, in addition to Mailla, Yule's Marco Polo, vol. ii. pp. 110–12; Marco Polo calls him Bayan Chincsan, or Bayan Hundred Eyes—Bayan meaning "noble," or "the brave."

† One of these was Lieouwen Hoan, the gallant defender of Sianyang.—Mailla.

A numerous gathering held the fortified town of Ganlo, situated south of Sianyang, but on the banks of the same river,* and as all preparations had been made by its commandant, Litingchi, for a protracted defence Bayan prudently refused to halt before it. Leaving a small corps to observe the Chinese force stationed there, the Mongols passed on to assail the main positions of the Sungs, defending the passages of the Great River. Chang Chikic, the commander at this point, sent a portion of his troops to harass the Mongols in their operations against the neighbouring cities; but his lieutenant was drawn into a general engagement, in which he lost his life and the greater number of his troops. This preliminary success was followed by the capture of Chayang, and its sister town Sinhing, where the garrisons were either put to the sword or committed self-destruction in imitation of the conduct of their leaders. In the siege of the latter place Lieouwen Hoan, who had become a marked man among the faithful adherents of the cause he had abandoned, nearly met his death. Riding near the walls to receive what he supposed would be a proposal to surrender, he was greeted with a flight of arrows, which killed his horse and inflicted several severe wounds upon himself. Enraged at this treacherous conduct, as he considered it, Lieouwen Hoan vowed that he would not spare a man of the garrison, and pressed the siege operations with all the energy springing from a personal grievance. The commandant cheated him of

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* The Han River.

the revenge on which he was confidently counting by throwing himself into the flames of his burning palace when further resistance appeared useless. Bayan, more magnanimous than the Chinese renegade, ordered that the bodies of the slain should be accorded honourable burial in token of his admiration of their bravery.

Bayan then continued his movement on the Kiang river taking as his central object the three cities, Hankow, Ouchang, and Hanyang, situated at the junction of the Han river with the main stream. At this point the Chinese had concentrated their strength. The garrisons had been largely increased, and a numerous fleet defended the passage of the river. Had the general Hiakoue been equal to the occasion the Mongols would never have succeeded in forcing a passage in face of the strong positions he held; but unfortunately he permitted himself to be outmanœuvred by his more skilful and enterprising opponent. By a series of feints which completely deceived Hiakoue, Bayan seized several important posts on the northern side of the Kiang, thus intercepting supplies and nullifying the superiority in which the Sungs could still boast on the water. That that superiority was not to remain undisputed or to long endure after their reverses on land was shown by the increasing activity of the Mongol fleet, which at the very commencement of the struggle obtained some advantage over the more numerous and confident Chinese squadron.

Meanwhile Bayan had thrown his main body against

Hanyang, and, while his war-ships, under the command of Artchu, were driving the Chinese to take refuge in Ouchang, he was subjecting that place to a heavy bombardment from catapults and engines that hurled combustibles with a precision remarkable in those days. When sufficient damage had been inflicted on the fortifications he ordered several assaults to be delivered against the cowed garrison, who, although enfeebled in courage and numbers, fought with some valour. Disheartened by defeats elsewhere, and by the overthrow of the fleet, which afforded them an avenue of escape, the garrison accepted the terms offered by Bayan, and Hanyang surrendered to the Mongols. Hankow had been captured shortly before this, and the only place that still held out was Ouchang* the most southern of these three cities. Against this the Mongols now directed all their efforts, but it offered no protracted resistance. Bayan, leaving behind a force of forty thousand men under his lieutenant Alihaya, continued his march upon the Sung capital, Lingan or Hangchow.†

After the naval successes of the Mongols, the remainder of the Sung fleet, with a considerable portion of the army under the command of Hiakoue, had retired down the Kiang river towards the capital, whither they carried the panic prevailing in those districts which had beheld the triumph of Mongol arms. In this moment of trepidation the public voice denounced

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* Ouchang afterwards surrendered, mainly through the representations of Lieouwen Hoan to the officers in command.

† The celebrated Kincsay.

in no measured terms the incapacity and indifference of Kiassetao, who, to avoid a worse fate, felt compelled to place himself at the head of the national forces. Large levies of men were ordered, the reserve in the treasury was drawn out for the equipment of an army, and individuals were called upon to contribute with their money and their arms to the scheme of national defence too late devised.

Meanwhile Bayan's army was on the march. Hoan-chow, a town on the northern bank of the Kiang, and eastward of the scene of his late triumphs, was surrendered by its governor, on the promise of a reward, without detaining him for a day; and Kichow, south of this city, followed the same example. In this portion of the war the services of Lieouwen Hoan proved invaluable, for many of the most important of the governors in the province of Kiangnan* were gained over by his representations to the side of the Mongols. Without halting Bayan crossed the Kiang and entered Kiangsi, establishing his head-quarters at the important town of Kieoukiang. From this position he directly menaced the Sung capital, as well as the cities on the lower course of the river. The advantage thus obtained with such little difficulty was rendered the greater by the voluntary surrender of several towns in the valley of the Kankiang† river and on the banks of Lake Poyang. The generosity which Bayan had

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* *I.e.*, Kiangsu and Ganhoei.

† The Kankiang rises on the borders of Kwantung, and flows northwards through Kiangsi into the Yangtsekiang.

shown towards his adversaries afforded a powerful inducement to the officials of a decrepit and expiring family, represented moreover by a child, to abandon a lost cause and to attach their fortunes to the rising power. What the humanity and generous instincts of Bayan began, the tact of Lieouwen Hoan and the arrogance of Kiassetao completed. Before the fighting was resumed the cause of the Sungs had been reduced to the lowest ebb by numerous desertions and by the half-heartedness of many who still remained faithful in name.

The Mongols had, therefore, obtained a good foothold in the southern provinces, and might with some confidence anticipate the final result before Kiassetao had so much as arrayed the army equipped out of the last resources of the Sungs. That army consisted of not more than one hundred and thirty thousand men in addition to a new fleet; but the major portion were untrained levies, largely composed of the effete aristocracy of Hangchow. What it lacked in strength and efficiency for war its general sought to replace by an unusual parade. His own equipage was magnificent, and his principal officers lounged on silken couches and ate off plates of gold. Before taking the field this commander sent, by a Mongol officer who had been made prisoner, a haughty message to Bayan, asking him whether he would conclude a treaty of peace on the old footing of the Kiang river being the boundary between the two countries. Bayan's reply* was that the proposal

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* "If you had really aimed at peace," he wrote, "you would have made this proposition before we crossed the Kiang. Now

had come too late. Nothing short of an unconditional and complete surrender on the part of the Sungs would satisfy the demands of the people who had beaten them in several successive campaigns, and who now virtually held them powerless in their grasp.

The fortified town of Chichow, on the Kiang, had been abandoned by the military commandant, but the civil governor, named Chao Maofa, resolved to hold it to the last, and made preparations for undergoing a siege. His efforts were neutralised by another traitor within the town, who concluded an agreement with the Mongol generals for its surrender as soon as they appeared before the walls. Unfortunately the views of the garrison were more in accord with the officer who desired to surrender than with him who wished to resist the Mongols to the last. When Bayan's army arrived Chao Maofa found that none would follow him. He, therefore, put an end to his existence as became a notable of the Empire; and his wife, Yongchi,*

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that we are the masters of it, it is a little too late. Still, if you sincerely desire it, come and see me in person, and we will discuss the necessary conditions." It is unnecessary to add that Kiassetao did not accept this offer.—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 347.

* This is one of the noble episodes in Chinese history. When Chao Maofa saw clearly how matters stood, "he summoned his household and relatives to a great repast, and when it had nearly concluded he turned to his wife Yongchi, and said that in a very short time the town would be in the possession of the enemy, and that, having the honour to be one of the magnates of the Empire, he could not flee without covering himself with infamy. But as for his wife, he counselled her to retire to a place of safety while yet there was time. Yongchi replied that she felt strong enough to show herself worthy of him; but her husband answered, smiling, that women and children were incapable of so much fortitude. Yongchi would then have killed herself, but that he arrested her hand. On the morrow, when the Mongols had completed their

framed in a not less heroic mould, refused to leave him, and they died together. Bayan, always sympathetic towards acts of devotion and bravery, ordered that these two, the only worthy citizens of Chichow, should be accorded honourable burial.

The capture of this town was the prelude to the contest about to begin at the mouth of the great river, which now beheld victorious Mongol armies marching on either bank, and a hostile fleet riding proudly on its broad waters. Kiassetao felt that the time had at last come when he must cast aside his sluggishness, or want of courage, and make some effort to arrest the steady advance of the Mongol army. He accordingly took up a position in the neighbourhood of Nankin, and occupied an island in the river with half his army, and arrayed his fleet for the purpose of disputing the passage. The position on the island was entrusted to a corps of seventy thousand men, under the command of an inexperienced officer named Sunhouchin, but it appears to have been not only badly defended, but also ill chosen.

Bayan marched against the Sung army in three divisions, the central one consisting of his fleet, still led by the intrepid Artchu. The Chinese were surprised, outmanœuvred and thoroughly beaten. Their

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task, they retired to a room in the interior of the palace and gave themselves their death-wounds."—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 348. This is far from being a unique occurrence among Chinese officials, and in the present century there have been numerous similar cases. During the revolts of the Panthays in Yunnan, and of the Mahomedans in the North-Western provinces and the dependencies in Central Asia, there were numerous instances of the same heroic devotion.

resistance was very slight, as they seem to have been seized with an unreasoning panic. The Mongols pursued them with vigour, inflicting great losses upon them and capturing their camp and all the rich spoil of a luxurious army. The Chinese fleet alone suffered small loss, but its escape was due to the precipitation or the caution shown by Hiakoue in withdrawing it from the encounter. On receiving the news of this defeat Kiassetao at once withdrew to a place of greater safety, leaving the Mongols to continue their advance without further opposition. The defeat of Sunhouchin and the flight of Hiakoue's ships left Bayan master of the whole course of the Kiang river and in a position to complete his preparations against the Sung capital.

Among the immediate consequences of this victory was the capture of Nankin,* the governor of which, unable to fulfil his charge, saved his honour in the same manner as Chao Maofa had done at Chichow He, too, invited all his connections and followers to a banquet, and then took the ready poison. In this instance proof was found also that the man who could regard death with such indifference was capable of devising a bold scheme of defence for the country. When his palace was being sacked by the Mongols an officer discovered a plan of operations, addressed to Kiassetao, which he brought under the notice of Bayan. That general, on perusing it, exclaimed, "Is it possible that the Sungs possessed a man capable of

* Then called Kien Kang, afterwards the capital of the Ming Dynasty.

giving such prudent counsel? If they had paid heed to it, should we ever have reached this spot?"*

By this time the main body had been, as the result of a grand council of war between the Chinese generals, Kiassetao, Hiakoue and Sunhouchin, withdrawn to Hangchow for the defence of the Emperor, while Hiakoue, with the fleet and a smaller force remained to dispute the passage from the Kiang river to the open sea. No serious objection was made to the proposed removal of the Emperor† and the court, for it was evident that the arrival of the Mongols was only a question of time, and Bayan's energy was so great that at any moment he might be expected. But still no determination was concluded, or, if concluded, carried into execution. Summer was then at its height, and Kublai wished that the army should halt and wait, before renewing the war, for the cooler weather of autumn. But it was no part of Bayan's plan to delay his final attack and give time for the Sungs to recover from their panic. His reply was characteristic of the man. He said that "to relax your grip, even for a moment, on an enemy whom you have held by the throat for a hundred years, would only be to give him time to recover his breath, to restore his forces, and in the end to cause us an infinity of trouble." Kublai had the wisdom to reply that, not being on the spot,

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* Bayan's nobleness of character was shown by the manner in which he protected the family of this devoted officer. Addressing his followers who wished to inflict punishment on them, he said, "These are the family of a faithful subject," and bestowed pensions upon them.—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 354.

† The boy Chaohien or Kongtsong.

he would leave the question in the hands of his talented general. Kublai's own inclinations* are said to have been in favour of peace and of an arrangement with the Chinese; but Bayan saw more accurately the necessity of settling the matter once and for all.

At this moment, when Fortune wore her darkest aspect for the Sungs, the successes of a general named Chang Chikie revived their courage and gave them some better hope than the promptings of despair. He recaptured several towns in Kiangsi and drove the smaller detachments of the Mongols back on Bayan's main body. A proclamation was issued by the Empress Regent calling upon all of Chinese race to oppose the Mongols with their utmost vigour; and there can be no doubt that, had Bayan put off operations as desired by Kublai, the Sungs would in the autumn have been much better prepared to resist the Mongols. The murder of several Mongol officers and envoys further increased the bitterness of the contest, and all hopes of a pacific settlement vanished in face of these outrages.† At this crisis Bayan was recalled by Kublai for the purpose of leading an army against Kaidu.‡

The Mongols had not been less successful in the

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* This may be doubted, although Mailla declares such to have been the case.

† Mailla says that one of these was committed on an ambassador sent by Kublai to propose a peace; but Gaubil's account that the victim was proceeding to Nankin to take up an official post there, appears much more probable, if only for the reason that victors never propose peace to the vanquished.—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 356.

‡ See next chapter.

west of China than we have seen them to be in the Eastern provinces. Alihaya, who had been left in command at Ouchang, had overthrown a fleet and army collected in Szchuen and Hoonan for the recovery of that town, and had won a great naval fight on the Tungting lake. Still further west Wang Leangchin, the governor of the portion of Szchuen subdued by the Mongols in the Yunnan campaign, wrested from the Sungs the few districts that remained in their possession, thus effecting a junction with the forces of Alihaya.

On all sides, therefore, the Mongols had overcome the national resistance, save where the relics of the Sung fleet and army lay assembled round the capital under the command of Chang Chikie; for before this the powerful and incapable minister, Kiassetao, had fallen into disgrace, and the Empress Regent, yielding to the force of popular indignation, had removed him from all his offices and banished him for life. A private enemy, of whom he had so many that in his fall he could not have hoped to escape their malice, was appointed to conduct him to a remote spot in Fuhkien; but he was not fated to reach it. Having been subjected to every species of indignity on the way, he was murdered in a temple whither he had gone to rest from the noonday sun. Thus ignobly fell, by the hands of an assassin, the man whose incapacity and love of luxury had contributed more than any other cause to the ruin of the Sung dynasty.

Chang Chikie, now the only supporter left of the Sung cause, resolved to assume the offensive while the Mongols were still suffering from some of the

effects of Bayan's absence. He accordingly sailed up the Kiang at the head of a vast fleet, computed to number not fewer than two thousand vessels of war, with the intention of attacking the Mongol positions below Nankin. The encounter took place off Chang-kiang, near which place the river widens into a noble stream at the point where on both sides the Imperial Canal enters the Kiang; but, although Chang Chikie delivered his attack with resolution, Artchu, the Mongol commander, proved himself fully capable of sustaining the reputation of his race for invincibility. The approach of the Chinese fleet was discovered long before it reached the neighbourhood of the Mongol forts; and Artchu had time to devise a scheme for its reception. Placing his best marksmen, who were instructed to attach lighted pitch and other combustibles to their arrows, in the largest of his vessels, which he supported with the remainder of his fleet, he then advanced to attack the Chinese, probably driving them before him into the narrow part of the river where their numbers would place them at a disadvantage. The Chinese fought well but with little skill. Some of their ships were set on fire, carrying confusion throughout the rest of the unwieldy flotilla, and an uncontrollable panic seized Chang Chikie's armada. The loss was tremendous. Seven hundred vessels remained in the hands of the Mongols, whilst a still greater number were either burnt or sunk. Those that escaped this fatal day were so overwhelmed by the blow that they never afterwards dared to attack the Mongols save with an amount of trepidation that rendered victory next to

impossible. As if to complete the effect of this victory, Bayan at this moment returned from Pekin to again assume the chief command of the Chinese war.

Whilst Artchu, who had shown himself to be a worthy coadjutor of the great Bayan, laid siege to Yangchow in Kiangsu, Bayan himself concentrated the scattered garrisons for an advance upon Hangchow, where the Sung court still tarried in hope of better times. The first resistance to the Mongol attack was made at the fortress of Changchow,* on the Imperial Canal, where several of the Chinese generals collected their shattered forces, resolved to hold out with the last drop of their blood. Bayan defeated several detachments sent to effect its relief, but the fortitude of its defenders compelled him to besiege it in form. To all his promises and arguments there was made the uniform reply that they held it for their master and would continue to hold it with their lives. The delay caused by this resistance ruffled the usually serene disposition of Bayan, and for the first time in his career he used threats towards a garrison endeavouring to perform its duty. His threats were as unavailing as his promises and his appeals to the hard logic of fact. At length the town was carried by assault; all the Chinese officers were slain except one, who cut his way out with eight followers; and the Mongols, breaking loose from the restraining influence of their general, put everyone they came across to the sword. The

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* The Chinginju of Polo, situated north-west of the modern Shanghai. The capture of this place by Colonel Gordon in 1864 was the last act of the "ever victorious army" of the Taeping war.

massacre of the brave garrison and inhabitants of Changchow is the single stain on Bayan's reputation.*

Meanwhile all was in confusion at Hangchow, where there was none to direct the military preparations commenced for its defence. The Mongol armies were converging on it both from the north and from the west, for while Bayan had been delayed before Changchow, another force was rapidly advancing through Kiangsi on the doomed capital. In these straits an embassy was sent to Bayan imploring peace on any conditions. "Our ruler is young and cannot be held responsible for the differences that have arisen between the peoples. Kiassetao, the guilty one, has been punished; give us peace, and we shall be better friends for the future." Such was the burden of their message. Bayan's reply was to the point. "The age of your prince has nothing to do with the question between us. The war must go on to its legitimate end. Further argument is useless."†

After the capture of Changchow no further obstacle worthy of the name remained in Bayan's path. The important towns Souchow and Kiahing, on the Imperial Canal, both surrendered to him without resistance. As a precaution several of the princes of the Imperial family were now sent into Fuhkien, and all

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* There is much doubt whether the facts were exactly as stated in the Chinese history. Marco Polo says that the force Bayan left in possession was first massacred by the Chinese, and that Bayan only ordered the destruction of the town in expiation for this offence. See Marco Polo, vol. ii. p. 41, and Colonel Yule's notes.

† Mailla, vol. ix. p. 366.

those who had the power began their preparations for withdrawing to a place of safety. The Empress Regent refused all proposals to retire with the Emperor to the south, and in a very few weeks after the plan was first mooted its execution was rendered impossible by the arrival of the Mongol army. Hangchow was in no position to offer a protracted defence, and the Empress Regent made, therefore, an unconditional surrender. The terms were arranged by conferences in Bayan's camp, and, after appointing a tribunal for the administration of affairs, it does not appear that the Mongols in any way interfered with the government of the city. Bayan made a triumphal progress through the streets at the head of his army, whilst one of his officers notified to the Empress that she and the Emperor would have to set out with as little delay as possible for Kublai's court. Kong-tsong, accompanied by all his relations who had been taken at Hangchow,* was sent to the northern capital, thus closing his reign and virtually the Sung dynasty as well. His mother summed up the situation in the words, "The Son of Heaven grants you the favour of sparing your life; it is just to thank him for it, and to pay him homage."

After the capture of the capital many of the great generals and officials of the Sungs gave in their tokens of obedience to Kublai. The departure of the

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* What manner of place Hangchow or Kincsay was may be learnt from Marco Polo's description of it (vol. ii. pp. 145–52). That gossipy Venetian traveller makes it out to have been the most magnificent city in the world.

Emperor and of the principal members of his family removed the objects of their fidelity. The country was exhausted and tired of war. It wished for peace, and would accept the favour with some gratitude even at the hands of an enemy. Hiakoue and several others of those who had led the Sung armies in their last encounters received from the hands of Kublai a re-appointment to their different functions. There were still some exceptions to this wide-spread worshipping of the rising sun, and a few brave men preferred to encounter all the dangers of an unequal struggle to recognising a foreign enemy as their master.

The relics of the Chinese army rallied at Wenchow, in Chekiang, under the command of the two princes, Ywang and Kwang Wang, with whom still remained the faithful Chang Chikie. The former of these princes was declared Emperor, and the people of the coast and the southern provinces gathered round these representatives of their ancient kings. The immediate effects of their proclamation were to arrest the defection of many Chinese who meditated going over to the side of the Mongols, and to attract a very considerable force to their standard. Several skirmishes were fought and won, and these princes established their head-quarters at Fouchow the capital of Fuhkien. These preliminary advantages were followed up, and for a moment it seemed as if the tide of Mongol success was not only arrested but on the point of being rolled back. The successes were, however, only hollow and deceptive. They were more than counterbalanced at the time by the capture

of Yangchow in Kiangsu, which had long resisted under the command of Litingchi the utmost efforts of Artchu and a chosen force.

After the surrender of that fortress the Mongols resumed operations on a larger and more active scale in the south, where they had not enjoyed unvaried success. Their attention was called the more urgently to the matter by the tidings of a defeat inflicted upon one of their lieutenants in the neighbourhood of Canton. The Mongols rapidly advanced out of Kiangsi for the purpose of restoring their shaken authority, and a victory at Nanyong, in the north of Kwantung, more than compensated for the defeat near Canton. Following up their advantages with their usual rapidity, they had in a few days also seized Chaochow,* where the Chinese vainly sought to defend their homes from the housetops and in barricaded streets. The main army of the Sungs was still more unfortunate. In a great battle at Chuchow, in Chekiang, it was driven from the field with heavy loss, and many of the leaders, who could ill be spared, were among the slain. The Sung princes then retired from Foochow to Siuenchow, a harbour further to the south—having only succeeded in evading the pursuing Mongol fleet in a mist. At this place the governor received them with very little friendly feeling, and in consequence of some misunderstanding even turned his arms against his fellow countrymen. The Sung fleet was then obliged to seek another asylum. The year A.D. 1276 closed in unrelieved gloom for the

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* A town in the coal mine districts due north of Canton.

cause of the native rulers. They had lost possession of every province with the exception of a few districts in Kwantung and Fuhkien.

During that winter Kublai's attention was again summoned to affairs in Mongolia, where his nephew Kaidu had renewed his hostile measures; and this afforded the Sungs an opportunity for momentarily recovering some of the ground they had lost. The Mongol armies speedily returned, vanquished the Chinese forces, and left the Sung princes no place of safety save their vessels and some of the lonely islands off the Canton estuary. Canton itself had before this been again taken by the Mongol forces. In this extremity the young Emperor died, but the few brave men still left resolved to continue the struggle. Another prince was declared Emperor by this faithful but much reduced band, under the name of Tiping, and Chang Chikie and a few other resolute adherents prepared to renew hostilities with the Mongols. "If Heaven has not resolved to overthrow the Sungs," said one of them, "do you think that even now it cannot restore their ruined throne?" Tiping's proclamation was made in the year A.D. 1278, but, instead of being the inauguration of a more prosperous period in the history of the dynasty, it was only the prelude to its fall.

The Sung prince took refuge with his fleet in a natural harbour in an island named Tai, which could only be entered with a favourable tide, and there Chang Chikie set himself to work with all his energy to prepare for a renewal of the contest. He had not neglected any precautions for the defence of the position

he held should he be attacked in it. His fortifications crowned the heights above the bay, and nearly two hundred thousand men were under his orders. The Mongol fleet at last discovered the whereabouts of the Chinese place of retreat, and prepared to attack it. Reinforcements were procured from Canton, and on their arrival the signal was given for an immediate assault on the position held by Chang Chikie and the only force remaining to the Sungs.

The Mongols attacked with their usual impetuosity, but after two days fighting they had obtained no decisive advantage. The Chinese fought with great gallantry, and under Chang Chikie's leading their rude valour was supplemented by his skilful dispositions. On the third day the Mongol admiral Chang Honfan, who happened to be a connection of the Chinese commander, renewed his attack, and after a stubbornly contested engagement succeeded in throwing the Chinese fleet into confusion. There can be no doubt that not a ship would have made good its escape, but for a heavy mist which suddenly fell over the scene, when Chang Chikie succeeded in making his way out to sea, and his example was imitated by sixteen vessels.

The vessel of the Emperor had not the same good fortune. Unable to extricate itself from the press of battle it was inevitable that it should fall into the power of the victor. In this desperate situation Lousionfoo, one of the most faithful of the Sung ministers, resolved to save the honour if not the life of his master. Having thrown into the sea his own wife

and children, he took the Emperor in his arms and jumped overboard with him. The greater number of the officers adopted the same resolution. Thus perished Tiping, the last of the Sung Emperors.

Meanwhile Chang Chikie was sailing away in search of another place of refuge; but his first thought still was more of the cause to which he was attached than of saving a life which had become of little value. On learning the death of Tiping he requested the mother of that prince, who had escaped with him, to choose a member of the Sung family to succeed him; but the grief at the loss of a son proved more potent than any inducement on public grounds to name a successor. She refused to be consoled for her loss, and seeing no hope left, threw herself overboard, thus putting an end to her anxieties. The high courage of Chang Chikie would not recognise the impossibility of retrieving their defeat, and he accordingly continued to sail in the direction of the south, where he might be safe from the Mongol pursuit, and would obtain some fresh succours from the tributary states of that region.

In this hope he was not to be disappointed, for the ruler of Tonquin not only gave him a friendly reception, but assisted him to refit his fleet, to lay in stores, and to collect fresh troops. Having thus recovered to some extent from the effects of his recent defeat, Chang Chikie resolved to return without delay, expecting to seize Canton by a sudden attack and to renew the struggle with Kublai's forces. His followers endeavoured to dissuade him from the attempt, but he was determined to again tempt fortune; and per-

haps he felt assured that unless he resorted to some vigorous course, not only would the cause of the Sungs be utterly ruined, but his own chosen band would in all probability break up and desert him. In A.D. 1279, twelve months after the death of Tiping, a Chinese fleet, representing the expiring effort of the Sung family, was bearing down on the city of Canton with hostile intent, and under the command of a man whose resolution and valour alone would have made the cause he represented formidable. There is no information extant as to whether the Mongols were aware of the approaching enemy, or whether they were in sufficient strength to successfully resist a sudden attack. At the most favourable supposition, however, Chang Chikie could not have obtained more than a local and temporary success. The Mongol position was then too thoroughly assured—Kublai's power being at its apex—for this semi-piratical squadron* to have achieved any durable success.

But the Fates willed that the blow, however forcible or feeble it might have proved, should not be struck. The approaching peril dissolved itself into a vain and empty menace before the wrathful elements of the China Sea. Chang Chikie's fleet had not turned the southern headland of the Kwantung coast when it encountered a terrific hurricane which destroyed the great majority, if not all, of Chang Chikie's ships. That gallant leader had refused to seek shelter under lea of the shore until the tempest had

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* It had been joined by most of the pirates of the coast.

exhausted itself, and he paid the penalty of his temerity. He burnt incense to the deities of the waters, and expected that the observance of a few superstitious rites would allay the force of the waves, and still the blasts of the typhoon. But on this occasion the simple faith of the Chinese hero produced no result, and when his vessel was overwhelmed and sank with all on board, the last champion of the Sungs disappeared. "I have done everything I could," he exclaimed when entreated to seek a harbour of refuge, "to sustain on the throne the Sung dynasty. When one prince died I caused another to be proclaimed Emperor. He also has perished, and I still live! Oh, Heaven! should I be acting against thy degrees, if I sought to place a new prince of this family on the throne?" His plans and hopes received a sudden and unexpected solution and response; but the valour and fidelity of the brave and faithful Chang Chikie will still remain as a striking and instructive example of the devotion sometimes shown by an adherent to the fallen fortunes of a royal family and a ruling House.

The conquest of China was thus completed. The kingdom of the Sungs, after nearly half a century of warfare, had shared the fate of its old enemy and rival, the Kin; and Kublai Khan had consummated the design commenced seventy years before by his grandfather Genghis. The long and obstinate resistance of the Chinese, despite treachery and incapacity in high places, against the first soldiers in the world, led by great princes such as Genghis, Tuli and Kublai, and by

the most accomplished of living generals, Subutai, Bayan and Artchu, is the clearest of proofs how vigorous must have been the latent strength of the Sung kingdom, strictly speaking the sole representative of ancient China.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE YUEN DYNASTY.*

Kublai Khan.

Kublai's power.—Marco Polo.—Kublai's Generals.—Difference between Northern and Southern China.—City of Pekin, or Cambaluc.—Genghis's Opinion of Kublai.—His ideal Policy.—Not attained.—His Impartiality to Religions.—Leans towards Buddhism.—Personal Demands.—His Court.—Will proceed no more to the Wars.—Personal History.—Japan.—Its previous Relations with China.—Kublai's Attempt to subdue it.—A Lingering Dispute.—Defeat of Mongols.—A great Expedition fitted out.—Evils of a divided Command.—Overthrow of Kublai's Forces.—A Disastrous Failure.—Attempts to retrieve it.—Japan Independent and Defiant.—The Protest of a Chinese Minister.—Mien or Burmah.—A Conflict of Pretensions.—Desperate Battle.—Skill against Numbers.—The Mongol Archers.—Invasion of Burmah.—Overrun by Mongol Army.—Tonquin.—Annam.—Sotou.—Prince Togan.—Reverses.—Internal Dangers.—Wen Tien Sang.—Foreign Missions.—Fresh War in Annam.—At first Victories.—Then Failure.—The Annamites.—Indignities to Representatives of the Sungs.—Harsh Administrators.—Farmers of the Taxes.—Java.—Mongols return Discomfited from that Island.—Loochoo.—Dangers in the North.—Kaidu and Nayan.—Defeat of Latter.—Kublai's great Victory.—Kaidu's Advance.—Bayan.—The Result.—Death of Kublai.—His Character.—His Domestic Affairs.—Mongol Power.

WHILE the war with the Sungs was in progress Kublai's authority had been steadily extending itself

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* In A.D. 1271 Kublai gave his dynasty the name of the Yuen or Original. The Mongols are henceforth to be known by that name.

throughout Northern China, and acquiring a greater hold on either the affection or the respect of the people. Several years before the death of Tiping and the last essay of Chang Chikie, Kublai had given his dynasty a distinctive name, and had assumed the title of Chitsou. Summoning to his court the most eminent of the Chinese ministers, and assisted by many skilful administrators from Western Asia and even from Europe,* Kublai's government had special elements of security, and was capable of attracting the sympathy and good-will of the indifferent as well as of crushing the opposition of its enemies. The skill and good fortune of his three principal generals, Bayan, Alihaya and Artchu, enabled him to devote all his attention to the consolidation of Mongol supremacy north of the Kiang river, where, it will not be forgotten, it had been established ever since the fall of the Kins forty years before, and where, amongst a population of semi-Tartar origin and long accustomed to Tartar domination, there was less difficulty in adapting the customs brought from the wilds of Mongolia to the institutions of an alien population. When Kublai returned to his capital

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* The Venetian traveller Marco Polo was one of these. He appears, from his own account, to have enjoyed the confidence of this great prince, at whose court he resided for many years. He was employed on several missions into Central Asia and Southern China, and his "Travels" contain a graphic description of the towns he visited during these tours. His account of Kublai's court and life at Pekin in the thirteenth century is more important historically, even though we cannot accept it literally, and it should be read in Colonel Yule's edition of his "Travels."

Cambaluc or Pekin,* after his first war with his brother, Arikbuka, it was with the full intention of beginning a fresh era in Chinese history. Adopting all the advantages to be obtained from the ancient Chinese civilisation, he only grafted upon it the greater vigour and military qualities of his northern race. Assisted by some of the most remarkable generals and ministers of the age, he soon succeeded in attaining his object and in making his court the most brilliant of the time. The final overthrow of the Sungs, the capture of their Emperor, the surrender of their capital, and, finally, the defeat of the last champions of their cause, all tended to facilitate the accomplishment of this task and to hasten its consummation.

From his earliest youth Kublai had given great promise of future valour and ability. His courage in a

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* Cambaluc or Khanbalig—"the city of the Khan"—the name of Pekin, or the Northern Capital, was made for the first time capital of China by the Mongols. A city near, or on its site, had been the chief town of an independent kingdom on several occasions, *e.g.*, of Yen, of the Khitans, and of the Kins. A long description is given in Marco Polo. There were, according to him, twelve gates, at each of which was stationed a guard of one thousand men; and the streets were so straight and wide that you could see from one end to the other, or from gate to gate. The extent given of the walls varies: according to the highest estimate they were twenty-seven miles round, according to the lowest eighteen. The Khan's palace at Chandu, or Kaipingfoo, north of Pekin, where he built a magnificent summer palace, kept his stud of horses, and carried out his love of the chase in the immense park and preserves attached, may be considered the Windsor of this Chinese monarch. The position of Pekin had, and still has, much to recommend it as the site of a capital. The Mings, after proclaiming Nankin the capital, made scarcely less use of it, and Chuntche, the first of the Manchus, adopted it as his. It is scarcely necessary to add that it has since remained the sole metropolis of the Empire. See Marco Polo, *passim*; Amiot's "Memoires sur les Chinois," tom. ii. p. 553; Pauthier, p. 353–354.

battle nearly fifty years before this time had been conspicuous, and his grandfather Genghis had predicted a more brilliant future for him than for any other of his children or grandchildren.* The acts of his matured age amply confirmed any prophecies that may have been hazarded about his future career, and when the Sungs were vanquished he could boast that he had carved out in Eastern Asia an Empire not less splendid than that formed by Genghis in the North and the West.

When Kublai permanently established himself at Pekin he drew up consistent lines of policy on all the great questions with which it was likely he would have to deal, and he always endeavoured to act upon these set principles. In framing this system of government he was greatly assisted by his old friend and tutor, Yaochu, as well as by other Chinese ministers. He was thus enabled to deal wisely and also vigorously with a society with which he was only imperfectly acquainted; and the impartiality and insight into human character, which were his main characteristics, greatly simplified the difficult task that he had to accomplish. In nothing was his impartiality more clearly shown than in his attitude with regard to religion. Free from the prejudices and superstition of the early Mongol faith, the family of Genghis had always been

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* According to the Mongol chronicler Sanang Setzen, Genghis had said, "The words of the lad Kublai are well worth attention; see, all of you, that you heed what he says! One day he will sit in my seat, and bring you good fortune such as you have had in my time!" His father Tuli showed, it will be remembered, exceptional military talent in the wars in China.

characterised by a marked indifference to matters of religion, and Kublai carried this indifference still further than any of his predecessors had done. His impartiality showed not the working of a well-balanced judgment towards the convictions of others, but rather the absence of all sentiment and the presence of a hard and unattractive materialism.

He at first treated with equal consideration Buddhism and Mahomedanism, the creed of the Christian and that of the Jew. He is reported to have said that there were four Prophets revered by all the world, and that he worshipped and paid respect to them all in the hope that he who was greatest among them in Heaven might aid him.* Whether this statement may be accepted with implicit credence or not there can be little doubt that it expresses with sufficient accuracy Kublai's views in matters of religion. He made a politic use of one and all; and he worked upon men by their fears and by humouring their predilections. Some have imagined that he sympathised with Christianity, but his measures in support of Buddhism and in favour of his friend the young Pakba Lama were much more pronounced than anything he ever undertook for the Nestorians or the Jews. Whatever his own secret convictions may have been, none were ever admitted into his inner confidence; but in his acts he evinced a politic tolerance

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* See Ramusio's addition to text of "Marco Polo," vol. i. p. 310. The Four Prophets were Christ, Moses, Mahomed, and Sakya Muni.

towards all creeds, and none could say that he favoured one more than another.

But if Kublai was tolerant or indifferent in matters of religious belief he was very firm in requiring from all prayers and adoration* for himself as the Emperor of the realm. Priests were appointed and particularly enjoined to offer up prayers on his behalf before the people, who were required to attend these services and to join in the responses.† About the same time Kublai also adopted the Chinese practice of erecting a temple to his ancestors, whom he named for several generations before Genghis. Coins with his image stamped upon them were circulated freely, and images of himself were sent to the principal towns to be paid reverence to by the people. These decrees were all passed before the year A.D. 1270, and no means were spared for rendering his rule popular with his new subjects. At first it will be perceived that he identified himself with no cause or party in particular; but, as time went on, and as he appreciated the situation more accurately, he discarded this impartiality and identified himself with many of the prejudices and views of the mass of the Chinese people.

Naturally fond of pomp, and knowing how much the masses are impressed by the glitter of a gorgeous court, Kublai caused a state ceremonial to be drawn up of a magnificent character. His courtiers were

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* The Kow-tow.

† See "Marco Polo," vol. i. p. 348.

required to dress after a uniform fashion, and to appear in fixed apparel on all state occasions. His banquets were of the most sumptuous description. Strangers from foreign states were admitted to the presence and dined at a table set apart for travellers, while the great king himself feasted in the full gaze of his people. His courtiers, generals and ministers, attended by a host of servitors, and protected from enemies by twenty thousand guards, the pick of the Mongol army; the countless wealth seized in the capitals of numerous kingdoms; the brilliance of intellect among his chief adherents and supporters; the martial character of the race that lent itself almost as well to the pageantry of a court as to the stern reality of battle; and, finally, the majesty of the great king himself—all combined to make Kublai's court and capital the most splendid at that time in the world. The gossipy, but shrewd and observant, Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, whose account of the countries of Asia illustrated an unknown continent, describes in his own quaint way the mode of life and the ceremonies in vogue at Kublai's capital. The curious in such matters will find that after six centuries the interest has not departed from his pages, which give us corroboratory proof of the evidence we have from other sources.

When Kublai returned from his first campaign against Arikbuka he proclaimed his intention of proceeding no more to the wars. Henceforth he would, he said, conduct his military operations, not in person, but by his lieutenants. He was led to this decision

partly by his increasing years,* and partly by the extent of his Empire which necessitated vigilance at all points. For even before the overthrow of the Sungs he was meditating fresh conquests, and either actuated by some conviction of political necessities of which we must necessarily be ignorant, or goaded into action by the irrepressible energy of his race, he had resolved on prosecuting an enterprise for which no necessity existed and the benefit of which was more than doubtful. That enterprise was the invasion of Japan.

The old connection between China and the islands of Japan has been several times referred to, and it has been stated that the ruling dynasty in that country was supposed to trace back its descent to Taipe, a Chinese exile in the twelfth century before our era. At various periods the relations between the two states had been drawn more closely together than the intercourse usual between neighbours; and, although the Emperor of China had always been allowed a superior position, and had sometimes asserted his shadowy claims to exact feudal rights, the Japanese Government had none the less maintained and preserved its independence with good-tempered firmness.

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* Kublai was born in the eighth month of the year A.D. 1216, and was the fourth son of Tuli, himself the fourth son of Genghis by his favourite wife. He was proclaimed Khakhan on his brother Mangu's death in A.D. 1260. Marco Polo describes his appearance as follows (see also his portrait, vol. i. p. 319) :—"He is of a good stature, neither tall nor short, but of a middle height. He has a becoming amount of flesh, and is very shapely in all his limbs. His complexion is white and red, the eyes black and fine, the nose well formed and well set on." His conquest of Yunnan in A.D. 1253–54 remains the most remarkable of his military achievements.

There had been one conflict between the states in the case of Corea,* but the result had been to inspire them with a mutual respect. The islanders of "the rising sun,"† safe in their insular position, had remained undisturbed by the great Mongol outpouring which had revolutionised the face of Asia. If they were aware of the startling changes on the mainland nothing more than the echo reached their shores. Kublai was apparently piqued at their indifferent attitude towards his power, and resolved at an early stage in his career to bring them within the sphere of his influence.

In A.D. 1266, Kublai had sent two envoys with a letter‡ from himself to the King of Japan, complaining that no friendly message had been sent since his accession to power, and that it would be well to repair this omission as soon as possible in order to avoid the horrors of war. But neither the envoys nor the letter reached their destination. The Mongol messengers travelled by way of Corea, which held more intercourse with Japan than the other countries of Northern China, and which was allied on terms of friendship with Kublai; but when requested to assist these envoys in reaching their destination, all the Coreans did was to point to the danger and difficulty of the voyage, and to expatiate on the inaccessibility of Japan. Unaccustomed to the sea these Mongols were easily dissuaded from their undertaking, and returned to Kublai's court

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* See *ante*, page 292.

† "Jé" means sun, and "pen" origin. See Mailla, vol. ix. p. 304.

‡ For terms of this letter, see Mailla, vol. ix. p. 303–304.

without having delivered their letter or accomplished any portion of their mission. After this abortive attempt the continued silence or indifference of the Japanese was treated as proof of their hostility. Two years later, in A.D. 1268, Kublai sent orders to the Corean ruler to collect his naval and military forces and to hold them disposable for his service. The war with the Sungs was still far from being settled, and it was uncertain whether Kublai would employ this auxiliary force against Japan or against the Chinese; but the Corean king promised to place at the service of the Mongols a fleet of one thousand vessels and ten thousand men. Kublai sent one of his officers to inspect, and apparently also to instruct, the forces of this new ally and dependent.

In the following years Kublai's attention was frequently directed to the consideration of the subject of how he might best accomplish the chastisement of the Japanese, and as soon as the result of the Chinese war had become well assured he adopted more active measures for the attainment of his object. In A.D. 1274 he sent a small fleet of three hundred vessels and fifteen thousand men against Japan, but the result was unfortunate. The Japanese attacked it off the island of Tsiusima,* and inflicted a great defeat upon the Mongols. Apparently the larger portion of this fleet consisted of the contingent provided by the King of Corea; and Kublai does not seem to have thought

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* An island off the Corean mainland, in the direction of Japan The Coreans claim to own it now.

that his military honour was in any degree involved in this disaster, for in the years immediately following he showed greater inclination than at any previous time to come to terms with the Japanese. The Japanese, inflated by their naval victory and confident in their insular position, refused to yield, in either form or substance, to the pretensions of Kublai, and, at last, either anxious to show the firmness of their resolve or desirous of bringing the tedious discussions to an end, they caused the last of the Mongol envoys* to be murdered in A.D. 1280. This violation of the laws common to all humanity left Kublai no choice save to vindicate his majesty. He was the less disinclined to make the attempt because the conquest of Southern China had been completed, and a large body of disbanded Chinese troops, who had deserted from the Sungs, were available for military operations. At the time it must have seemed that the Japanese had chosen a bad moment for bringing their differences with a formidable enemy to a head.

During the year A.D. 1280–81, great preparations were made in all the harbours of Kiangsu, Chekiang and Fuhkien for the expedition which was to punish and subdue the bold islanders who had openly defied the great conquerors of the continent. The fleets and the armies released by the destruction of the last vestiges of Sung power were concentrated in the eastern seaports, and a large number of the survivors

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* The facts are obscure, but there seems no doubt that Kublai's envoys were received in Japan on several occasions after his first abortive attempt in A.D. 1266.

of the Chinese armies were re-enlisted for the purposes of this war. The total force to be employed considerably exceeded one hundred thousand men, of whom it is not probable that more than one-third were Mongols.* The large number of native troops employed is shown by, among other circumstances, the harbours from which they set out, which were Kinsay and Zayton,† the nearest and most convenient for the despatch of the troops stationed in the south. A preferable plan, because minimising the sea-voyage for the inexpert Mongol sailors, would have been to have concentrated the army of invasion in Corea, and to have thence directed it against Japan. But this would have involved much preliminary marching to and fro, and the courage of the Chinese recruits would probably have evaporated long before a start could have been made. Moreover, the war was far from popular with the Mongols themselves, and the principal object of the Pekin Council was to get the business done as quickly as possible, and before the army had relaxed the energy which counts for so much in the prosecution of a war. Although, therefore, it entailed a long sea voyage it was from the harbours of Zayton and Kinsay that this great armada set sail.

As often the case in an army composed of mixed nationalities, two generals were appointed to the command, one a Chinese and the other a Mongol ; but

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* Gaubil says thirty thousand Mongols were killed, and seventy thousand Chinese and Coreans were taken prisoners. From the former total the slain Chinese and Coreans should probably be deducted.

† Chinchow in Fuhkien.

the arrangement did not in this instance conduce to the promotion of harmony. Numerous points arose for settlement, but they proved only provocative of dissension. One general fell ill and had to resign his command, and another disappeared during a storm at sea. When the wind-shattered fleet reached the islets off the north-western coast of Japan it was reduced in numbers and the men were disheartened in courage. The Japanese fleet was hovering round it in readiness to attack whenever a favourable opportunity offered, and on the large island of Kiusiu the Japanese forces mustered in large numbers. A fresh storm destroyed many more of Kublai's war-junks and drove others out to sea to be never again heard of; and when the army, in despair, endeavoured to construct fresh vessels for their return journey the Japanese assailed them with all their forces. After an unequal contest, in which the Mongols seem to have made a strenuous resistance, the relics of this army were compelled to surrender. While the lives of the Chinese and Coreans were spared, all the Mongols were put to the sword, and very few escaped to tell Kublai the mournful tidings of the greatest disaster* which had ever befallen his arms or those of any of his race.

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* The facts are far from clear. Marco Polo (vol. ii. p. 203–205), narrates a story of how a portion of the Mongol army, seizing some Japanese vessels, sailed for the chief island and captured the capital. It is difficult to accept this, more especially as the year given for it is A.D. 1279; but Marco Polo should have known the facts. Perhaps it was an invention to soothe the military pride of the Mongols. Kublai punished two of the commanders who escaped, and whose mistakes had been particularly egregious; but his wrath found little on which to appease itself.

It was no part of the Mongol character to acquiesce in defeat. Their enterprises had on some previous occasions been checked, and not succeeded to the full measure of their hopes; but they had always returned in greater force to complete what they had been compelled to leave half finished. Brought face to face with a new and formidable element the determination of the race was of a sufficiently practical kind to recognise that no advantage could be gained by rushing blindfold against an obstacle that could defy their utmost effort, and the common sense of the Mongols revolted against the resumption of an operation that was seen to be most costly and unlikely to result in anything save discomfiture and disappointment. But Kublai was only a mortal, and the spectacle of his shattered vessels and his slaughtered thousands appealed to him strongly for revenge. What had been merely the prompting of ambition now presented itself to him with all the force of a sacred duty. A Mongol had never yet acquiesced in the immutability of defeat. Was it reserved for the proud Kublai to be the first to make so important a departure from the accepted policy and traditions of his race and House?

During the following years Kublai made energetic preparations towards repairing this defeat, and in A.D. 1283 he had, with the assistance of the Corean king, equipped a fresh fleet for this service; but he found greater difficulty in procuring sailors to man it. Several mutinies,* which assumed alarming propor-

* Mailla, vol. ix. p. 418.

tions, arose from the dislike generally prevailing to embark on this voyage; and Kublai's plans advanced very slowly towards realisation. At last, in A.D. 1286, after a sharp protest* from the President of the Council, Lieousiuen, Kublai gave orders for the abandonment of all further designs upon Japan. Bitter as the decision must have been to this haughty ruler, it was resolved that no fresh preparations should be made for the retrieval of the late defeat, and that the brave islanders of Japan should be left to enjoy the liberty which they had shown they knew how to defend. The Mongols might well rest satisfied with what they had accomplished, although, like many great continental peoples, they had to confess on the sea a superior in a race of free-born islanders, inferior in

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* The text of Lieousiuen's speech is worth preserving. The Chinese officials protested against Kublai's desire to extend his Empire, because it would have the effect of weakening him. They apparently overlooked its other effect, the shortening of the Yuen tenure of power. "During the three or four years in which you have been engaged in wars in these foreign countries, how many brave officers and soldiers have we not lost, and what advantages have been derived from them? The people oppressed, and bands of vagabonds reduced to levy on the country the enormous requisitions necessary for their sustenance; that is a true picture of the dire consequences of this expedition. However small the kingdom of Kiaochi (Tonquin and Cochin China) may be, Your Majesty ordered one of your sons to march for the purpose of subjecting it. He penetrated into it for a considerable distance, but was obliged to beat a retreat without having accomplished anything, and after having lost the greater portion of his army and one of his best generals. Japan is separated from our Empire by a great sea, and we have nothing to fear from its enterprise. If in the new expedition over which you are meditating a check similar to the last is experienced, what a disappointment it will be for Your Majesty, and how great the discontent must be among the people."—Mailla, vol. ix. pp. 427–428. It was in consequence of this protest that Kublai resolved to finally abandon his designs against Japan.

numbers, and also in the science and machinery of war. It will be seen that their successful defence inspired the Japanese with a spirit of aggression, and that they became at a later period the assailants in a struggle with the inhabitants of the mainland.

The conquest of Yunnan by Kublai at an earlier stage in his career, and the subsequent successes of Uriangkadai, had led to the institution of relations with the rulers and peoples of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Several of these had been reduced to a state of more or less dependence upon the Mongol general in that region; but the principal of them, the King of Mien or Burmah, who arrogated to himself the title of King of Bengal* as well, was inveterately hostile and defiant. While the Sung dominions remained only partly subdued, the Mongols were unable to act with any vigour in this quarter, and sought to obtain by diplomacy the recognition of their authority by the sovereign of Mien. But this potentate, trusting in his wealth, the numbers of his people, and the extent of his dominions from the borders of Yunnan to the Gulf of Bengal, if not to the Gangetic Delta, haughtily refused to abate one jot of his authority. He would be an independent prince or nothing.

The Mongol garrisons in Yunnan were, therefore, reduced to the lowest possible limits in order that an active force might be placed in the field; and when the King of Mien crossed the frontier at the head of

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* See Yule's "Marco Polo," vol. ii. pp. 64–65. Burmah is still known to the Chinese as Mien.

a large army, he found the Mongols drawn up to receive him on the plains of Yungchang. The numbers were greatly in favour of the Mien ruler, who had not only a large body of cavalry, but, like another Pyrrhus, had brought into the field a strong contingent of elephants. The Burmese army exceeded fifty thousand men, and included, according to one authority eight hundred, according to another two thousand, elephants ; whereas, at the highest estimate, the Mongols mustered no more than twelve thousand men* in all. The Burmese possessed also an artillery force of sixteen guns. Despite, therefore, the well-known valour and great military qualities of the Mongols, the result of this battle appeared to be more than doubtful when the two armies halted in face of each other. The struggle proved long and hardly contested.† The superiority of the Burmese in cavalry, added to the advantage they possessed in their corps of elephants—manned with artillery and slingers—gave an impetuosity to their first attack which Kublai's soldiers were unable to resist. The Mongol commander had foreseen this result, and had provided against it. Dismounting his cavalry, he ordered his whole force to direct their arrows upon that part of the Burmese battle which was composed of the elephants. Before this hailstorm, for the Mongols were then incomparably the best archers in

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* Marco Polo.

† See pp. 62–70 of "Marco Polo" for a description of this campaign.

the world,* the onset of the elephants was speedily checked and thrown into confusion, and these infuriated animals rushed through the ranks of the army, carrying confusion in their train. The Mongols then remounted their horses and completed the effect of this panic by charging the main body of the Burmese army. The latter was driven with heavy loss from the field, and the Mongols brought the campaign to a brilliant conclusion by the capture of several towns on the Irrawaddi. The Mongol general was compelled by the heat of the weather to withdraw his troops to the cooler quarters of Northern Yunnan, leaving the Burmese king with a shattered reputation, but still untouched and practically secure in the interior of his dominions. The Mongols only retired with the determination that they would return to complete their triumph, and the local commander, Nasiuddin, sent a report to Kublai that it would be an easy matter to add the dominions of the King of Mien to his Empire.

Six years after this campaign, in which the Mongols fully sustained their military reputation, Kublai sanctioned preparations for the invasion of the dominions of the King of Mien. He entrusted the principal command to Singtur, one of his most trusted generals and a member of the Royal House; and a

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* Although the age which we are accustomed to think of as the golden period of English archery—when the traditions of Robin Hood preserved their force, and when the bowmen turned the day at Cressy and Poictiers.

large army* was concentrated in Yunnan for the purposes of this war. The Burmese troops were defeated in several encounters, and the capital Mien, or Amien, was closely besieged. The king had made preparations for a protracted defence, but apparently his heart failed him, for after the siege had continued a few days he sought safety in flight. The Mongols followed up their successes by its capture, and by a triumphant advance to the neighbourhood of Prome. They carried their raids into Pegu, and received the submission of several of the tribes of the Assam frontier. Thus were the Mongol campaigns against the Burmese brought to a conclusive and successful issue; and the authority of Kublai became as firmly established in this remote south-western quarter as it was in any other portion of his wide-stretching dominions.

Almost at the same time as this war in Burmah troubles arose with the ruler of Chenching, a portion of the modern Tonquin. In A.D. 1278, after the final overthrow of the Sungs, this prince had recognised the Mongol supremacy, and had for several years sent tribute to Canton. But on his death his heir refused to hold further intercourse with the Mongols, and, gathering the braver spirits of the country round him, resolved to resist all attempt at encroachment on the part of his neighbours. Sotou, the Mongol commander

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* Marco Polo, probably repeating the talk of the court, says that it was composed of the gleemen and jugglers of the palace.—Vol. ii. p. 73.

at Canton, apprehensive lest the danger should assume larger proportions, resolved to adopt vigorous measures against this defiant prince. Sotou's force compelled these patriots to take refuge in the hills, but when the Mongols attempted to carry on the war in their fastnesses they found that they were endeavouring to accomplish something that required greater vigilance and a larger force. One detachment was destroyed and cut to pieces in a defile, whilst Sotou's main body was roughly handled and compelled to beat a hasty retreat from before a stockaded position. Kublai was very much distressed by these reverses, and sent fresh troops from his capital, under the command of Togan, one of his sons. The increased interest displayed in this insignificant contest did not, however, produce any greater or more fortunate result.

Westwards of Chenching was the state of Annam,* which had also bowed to the Mongol yoke, but the discomfiture of Sotou had restored the sinking confidence of all these southern potentates, and when the Mongols recommenced their advance against Chenching the King of Annam had resolved to repudiate his allegiance to them and to throw in his lot with his neighbours. When, therefore, Togan's army, which had been joined by Sotou's forces, reached the frontier of Annam, it found, instead of the supplies and welcome upon which it had counted, an army drawn up to dispute its further march. The troops of Annam

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* Chenching is maritime Tonquin, and Annam the remainder of that state and the whole of Cochin China.—Mailla, vol. ix. pp. 420–421.

were ill able to cope with Kublai's trained soldiers in regular warfare. The Mongols crossed the river Fouleang on a bridge of boats in face of the Annam army, and drove their adversaries in confusion from their positions. The Annamites retreated, but continued to show a good front, and they found an invaluable ally in their climate. The heat and the damp proved more formidable to Togan's army than the valour or skill of these defenders of their country; and after a resolute attempt to force his way to Chenching, Kublai's son found himself compelled to order a retreat. The Mongols appear to have lost all sense of discipline as soon as their backs were turned to the foe. Ignorant of the country they wandered from their course, and only a few detachments regained the province of Kwantung. Liheng, Togan's principal lieutenant, was slain by a poisoned arrow in one battle, and Sotou fell fighting, sword in hand, when attempting to force his way over the Kien Moankiang river. Togan escaped to bear in person the sad tidings to Kublai. In A.D. 1286, Kublai wished to despatch a fresh army against Annam, and even went so far as to give orders to Alihaya, one of his chosen generals, who had been engaged in exploring the upper course of the Hoangho, to proceed to the scene of war. But the representations of the Chinese minister, Lieousiuen, again prevailed. The terrors of the hot and humid climate of Annam had been found, and were now admitted to be not less real and formidable than the hurricanes of the storm-tossed shores of Japan; and Kublai at last

announced his intention of foregoing all design of retrieving the honour of his arms in this quarter.

Kublai was the more induced to adopt this pacific policy because numerous internal troubles raised feelings of apprehension in his breast. Already the great mass of the Chinese people were showing that they bore their new masters little love, and that they would not long consent to remain apathetic subjects of an alien rule. In Fuhkien, Houkwang and Kiangnan the Mongol garrisons were kept constantly on the alert, and indeed had often to resort to extreme measures against the disaffected inhabitants. Some years before the final abandonment of all further designs upon Japan or Annam a fanatic had proclaimed a revival of the Sung dynasty in Fuhkien, and his auguries, drawn from the position of the planets, of coming misfortune to the Mongols sufficed to bring one hundred thousand supporters to his side. Kublai was thoroughly alarmed at this popular demonstration, which showed the utter hollowness of the Mongol conquest, and, suspicious of the members of the Sung family in his power, he caused them to be brought before him, with Wen Tien Sang, the last and most faithful of their ministers. The members of the Sung family were banished to Tartary, and Wen Tien Sang, whose fidelity remained proof to the end, and who refused to enter the Mongol service, was publicly executed.* Notwithstanding

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* "I am content," he said; "my wishes are about to be realised." He marched to the scaffold with a smiling countenance, and beat the earth with his head several times in honour of the Sung dynasty.—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 417.

these sweeping measures the populace was far from being either cowed or won over; and Kublai found in the sentiment of the Chinese towards his race the most potent inducement to abstain from costly and hazardous expeditions against the few of his neighbours who were willing to give their lives in defence of their freedom.

But although his necessities compelled him to abandon the expensive dreams of military conquest which he had formed, his restless spirit urged him to attempt other means for the accomplishment of his purpose. He sent, therefore, a mission and a skilful envoy to visit the courts of the states and islands of Southern Asia; and the presents brought back from hospitable potentates flattered the declining years of the aged Emperor, who saw, because he wished to see, in their courtesy the formal recognition of his power.

Whether encouraged by the result of this embassy, or from some other cause that is unknown, Kublai came to the sudden determination to renew the war with the King of Annam; and he again entrusted the task to his son Togan, who had been appointed Viceroy of Yunnan. The active command was divided between two generals, and a squadron co-operated with the land forces from the sea. The Mongols were victorious in seventeen distinct encounters, and the vanquished prince of Annam, so late exulting in the confidence of victory, was obliged to seek his personal safety by a timely flight. As has often proved the case under similar circumstances, the true danger of the undertaking did not reveal itself

until all open opposition had been overcome. The Annamite army had been overthrown, the king had fled no man knew whither, and the capital was in the hands of the national enemy. There was no one left to dispute the authority of the Mongols, and apparently their work was done.

At this point Apachi, the most experienced of the commanders, recommended that Togan should order the return of the army to its own country. All the objects of the war had been, he said, attained, and the Annamites had been forcibly reminded that the Mongols could, when they chose, administer the necessary chastisement for any act of hostility. There was no inducement to delay the return march, and provisions were daily becoming more scarce and the heat more intense. But Togan put off his decision until his army had become so reduced by its privations that the safer plan seemed to be to remain in its position until it had recruited its exhausted strength. Meanwhile the Annamites gathered from all sides, their neighbours came to their assistance, and their king suddenly returned from his place of safety to put himself at their head. Togan was at length compelled to give, as a matter of necessity, the order of retreat which was before the dictate of ordinary prudence, and the Mongol army, although victorious in the field, was constrained to make a hasty and undignified exit from Annam. Kublai was so indignant at this untoward and unexpected result that he removed Togan from his governorship, and forbade him to visit the court. The King of Annam completed by his tact the task

which his valour and judgment had carried far towards a successful conclusion, for when he had vanquished the Mongol army, and expelled it from his dominions, he sent a letter of apology for having so long opposed Kublai by arms, together with an image of solid gold in the shape of tribute. For this reign Annam made good its claims to independence, and, partly from its situation, partly also, perhaps, from its unimportance, it has succeeded in maintaining it ever since. If in the present age it is exposed to any immediate danger it is at the hands of our gallant and courteous neighbours, the French, who only require the appearance of another Dupleix to carve out a fresh empire in the kingdoms of the Indo-Chinese peninsula along the banks of the Meikou and the Sangkoi, and on the shores of the Gulf of Tonquin.

In the meanwhile the popular disaffection was steadily increasing. The Sung Emperor, whose place of imprisonment had been several times changed, was sent to Tibet to be inculcated with the doctrines of Buddhism, and the feeling in the mind of the Chinese had not been concealed that he would have shown a greater regard for his honour if he had put an end to his existence sooner than submit to this indignity. But the shock to the traditions of loyalty to the Sungs exercised very little influence on the patriotic ardour of a great and enslaved people. Insurrections in Fuhkien and Kwantung, the necessity for exceptional precautions at the capital and in all the garrisoned towns, where the Mongols, literally speaking, slept with their arms ready to their hands, showed that the

people were far from being reconciled to their fate. In their contempt for the barbarian conqueror they would not even give his attempt at governing them with a fair show of justice and moderation a hearing. It was condemned before anything could be said in its defence. The Chinese people would have none of it. They eagerly expected the hour of deliverance from a foreign yoke, and submitted with such patience as they could muster to the tyranny of Kublai's administrators, and to the bungling, although well-meaning, efforts of that ruler to propitiate their good-will.

Much of the failure of Kublai's endeavours to popularise his authority must be attributed to the tyrannical acts and oppressive measures of his principal ministers, who were mostly natives of Western or Northern Asia, and who regarded the Chinese with unfriendly eyes. Prominent among these were two* farmers of the taxes, who ground the people down by harsh exactions, and, although Kublai dismissed and punished them as soon as their iniquities became too glaring to be passed over, their successors followed very much in their footsteps. Nor were the exactions confined to the civil authorities. The older Kublai became the more he was attached to Buddhism, and the lamas, or priests of that religion, acquired greater influence under his patronage. Encouraged by the royal favour, one of these ventured to plunder the tombs† of the Sung Emperors, and when arrested at the instigation of a

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* Ahmed and Sanga.
† Situated at Chaohing in Chekiang.

Chinese official the Emperor ordered his release and permitted him to retain possession of his ill-gotten plunder. This brutal and injudicious clemency added fuel to the flame of popular indignation.

The failure of his enterprise against Japan had not wholly cured Kublai of his desire to undertake expeditions beyond the sea. To avenge an insult* offered to one of the envoys he was constantly sending into the Southern Archipelago, Kublai fitted out a large expedition against Kuava, a state identified with the island of Java. The Mongols as usual overcame the resistance openly offered them, but they were outmanœuvred, and suffered heavy losses in several skirmishes.† Their commander, seeing that there was not much prospect of speedily conquering the country of Kuava, at once withdrew his forces and returned to China with vast booty but little glory. A smaller expedition to the islands of Loochoo, which in the seventh century had been subjected by the Soui Emperor, Yangti, was not more fortunate, being obliged, on the death of its commander, to return to Chinese harbours without having accomplished any tangible result.

While these causes of discontent were in operation there were other circumstances threatening the fabric of Mongol supremacy in the very foundations of its power. The quarrel between Kublai and his brother,

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* A Chinese named Mengki. He was sent back with his face branded, the punishment of highwaymen.

† Mailla, vol. ix. pp. 52–53.

Arikbuka, has already been described; but although terminating with the success of Kublai, it left behind it the seeds of future trouble. Kublai's cousin, Kaidu, of the family of Ogotai, had, at an earlier period, assumed an attitude of marked hostility towards his kinsman, and the lapse of time only seemed to intensify the bitterness of their rivalry. But although Kaidu never wanted the inclination to molest his more successful opponent, it was long before he could collect sufficient strength to work him any harm. But about the period we have now reached he had been joined by Nayan, a member of the House of Genghis, who had gathered together a power of considerable dimensions in Tartary, and had formed a bond between all the tribes and chieftains of Northern Asia in their common antipathy to Kublai. By the year A.D. 1287 Kaidu's plans were in a fair way towards completion, and a general revolt throughout Mongolia had been arranged and was on the point of breaking out. Fortunately for him Kublai received intelligence of this scheme, and he resolved to strike a blow against Nayan before Kaidu could come to his assistance.

He sent his great general Bayan to Karakoram to maintain his authority there and to retard the advance of Kaidu, while he himself marched to encounter Nayan in the region which is now Manchuria. Nayan had made strenuous preparations for the war, but he was taken by surprise when he found that the Emperor was marching to attack him in overwhelming strength. Nayan's army probably did not exceed forty thousand men, while Kublai's may be computed at about one

hundred thousand,* better armed and with more formidable engines of war. Kublai, at this time more than seventy years of age, inspected his army from a tower erected on the backs of four elephants fastened together, and, having been informed by the soothsayers that the auguries were favourable and that he was promised victory, no longer delayed the signal for attack. The collision between these representatives of the same race proved bitter and protracted, and the result long hung doubtful in the balance. Nayan's followers fought with great valour, but the more desperate their resistance the more complete did it make Kublai's victory. Those who escaped the carnage of that day were glad to find safety in the woods of Northern Manchuria; but Nayan himself, who is said to have been a Christian, fell a prisoner into the hands of the great Emperor. It was a custom among the Mongols not to shed the blood of their own princes, so Kublai ordered that Nayan should be sewn up in a sack and then beaten to death.† The overthrow of Nayan enabled Kublai to return to Pekin, but it did not close the war. Kaidu remained unconquered, and resolved to tempt the decision of Fortune. He was advancing eastwards as rapidly as he could, receiving many reinforcements from the tribes and Mongol chiefs on his line of march, and not to be deterred from his undertaking by the overthrow

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* Marco Polo, either through the failing of memory, or, more probably, indulging his propensity for exaggeration, says there were seven hundred and sixty thousand horsemen alone present on both sides.—Vol. i. p. 302.

† Howorth's "Mongols," vol. i. p. 178.

of his ally Nayan, or by the power of Kublai, or by the reputation of the great general Bayan.

In this quarter Kublai's arms had met with a preliminary disaster before Bayan had had time to reach Karakoram. Kanmala, prince of Tsin, and son of Kublai, endeavoured to arrest Kaidu's march at Hanghai, near the banks of the Selinga river; but being forced to engage in a general battle he was signally defeated, and owed his life to the personal valour and devotion of Tutuka, a Kipchak officer.* The consequences of this reverse were considered to be so grave that Kublai again took the field in person, and, although no fighting is reported to have occurred, it may be assumed from Kaidu's retreat that Kublai succeeded in fully restoring his authority in the north. Kublai's prompt return also signified that he, for his part, did not desire to push matters to an extremity with Kaidu. He thought it more prudent to leave him the proverbial golden bridge for retreat.

After Kublai's departure the war still lingered on in this quarter, and, indeed, it continued until after his death. On the whole Kublai's lieutenants succeeded in maintaining their positions and in repelling the frequent attacks made against them.† But they did not attempt to carry on an offensive war against Kaidu. They were well content to rest upon their laurels. Bayan, who arrived late upon the scene,

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* Kublai said to him afterwards that "the having delivered Prince Kanmala did him more honour than a victory."—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 442.

† See Mailla, vol. ix. pp. 441, 469, and 470.

was alone not satisfied with doubtful successes. Wherever he appeared the result of the fighting was sure to be complete and unequivocal; and in the steppes of Mongolia his strategy and tactics were as conspicuous as they had been on the banks of the Great River and against the armies of the Sungs. On one occasion* he was, with a portion of his army, entrapped into an ambuscade, but his presence of mind and cool courage extricated him from the dangerous predicament, and his assailants left two thousand of their number slain upon the ground, and the rest prisoners in his hand. This was the last military achievement of the great Bayan, the most remarkable of Kublai's generals, perhaps of all the Mongol commanders with, of course, the exception of Genghis himself.

Bayan was too great a man to escape the shafts of the envious. In A.D. 1293, Kublai was so far influenced by the representations of those at the court that he ordered him to return to Pekin; and having removed him from his high military command, gave him instead the post of a minister of state. On Kublai's death, a few months later, Bayan reappears upon the scene to determine by his powerful voice the elevation of Prince Timour to the throne. That prince happened to be absent at the seat of war when his father died, and he owed his undisputed succession to the firmness shown by Bayan in his interests. Bayan did not long survive this change in the person of the ruler. A few months

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* Mailla, vol. ix. p. 454.

after the day when he drew his sword in support of the cause of the absent prince, he died at the comparatively early age of fifty-nine, leaving behind him a great reputation for skill as a general and high-mindedness as a man. His character appeals to our sympathy with the irresistible claims of a magnanimous and courageous soldier, who endeavoured on all occasions to mitigate the horrors of war and to temper the rage of his fierce soldiery. If Kublai had possessed many like Bayan, or perhaps known how to make use of their services, the Yuen dynasty would probably have occupied the throne of China for a longer period, and attained a greater amount of popularity in that country than it did.

After Kublai's last journey to the northern frontier his bodily infirmities increased so much that it was generally perceived that the end could not be far distant. In A.D. 1294, after the appearance of a comet in the preceding year, which the Chinese took advantage of to warn him to reform his administration, Kublai fell ill and died. He was then in the eightieth year of his age, and had occupied the throne for thirty-five years. Twenty-three years had elapsed since he first gave his dynasty the Chinese name of Yuen, and during the last sixteen years he had been the acknowledged ruler of the whole of China.

With regard to the private character and domestic life of this prince we owe most of the details to that vivacious gossip and remarkable traveller, Marco Polo. That Kublai was destitute of natural affection could not

be sustained in face of his evidently unaffected grief at the loss of his wife Honkilachi and his eldest son Chinkin; but there is much corroborative evidence of the charges brought against him by the Chinese historians, of having been too much addicted to such weaknesses as the love of money and a morbid inclination for superstitious practices; and he was also undoubtedly of a sensual nature. But admitting these faults and shortcomings, there remains a long list of virtues and high qualities in his favour. If he was not the greatest of Chinese Emperors, and that he certainly was not, his character is sufficiently vindicated by the events of his reign. They show him to have been well able to maintain a great Empire at its height, and to lead his people into the paths of peace and prosperity.

Kublai's long reign is not less remarkable if regarded from the standpoint of its being the climax of the triumph of a more vigorous race over a weaker. The greatest of the Mongol achievements, greater in its way than the march across Asia to the confines of Austria and the Persian Gulf, was undoubtedly the conquest of China. It had foiled the efforts of Genghis and his immediate successors, and all the credit of success was reserved for Kublai. The praise for having accomplished the most arduous of all the undertakings that formed part of the original Mongol programme belongs, therefore, to this prince. The Chinese were subdued and reduced by him to the condition of subjects of the Great Khan; but there can also be no question that they were throughout the most

unwilling of subjects. Kublai showed that he knew how to conquer them; but it was above his capacity to reconcile them to his rule. Perhaps the task was impossible; but his later public acts were conspicuously deficient in the tact and judgment required for the popularising of his authority. The triumph of the Mongols was incontestable on the basis of their superior military strength and knowledge; but it had no secure foundation in any portion of the country south of the Hoangho. Even before Kublai's death it was clear that it could not long endure; and when he disappeared the inevitable result came clearly into view.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DECLINE OF THE MONGOLS.

Timour.—Internal Troubles.—The Mongol Borders.—Mien, or Burmah.—Kaidu's Death.—A cheap Renown.—Papesifu.—Destruction of a Force.—Local Rebellions.—Restoration of Order.—Earthquakes, &c.—Honanta.—Haichan.—Aiyuli Palipata.—Embassies from Foreign States.—Chutepala.—Temudar.—A Tyrannical Minister.—Baiju.—Tiechi.—Baiju and Emperor murdered.—Yesun Timour.—A General Peace.—Opposes Buddhism.—Hochau.—His Sudden Death.—Tou Timour.—Grand Lama of Tibet.—President of Hanlin College.—Confucius or Fo?—Insurrections.—Tohan Timour, or Chunti.—Great Famine.—Widespread Distress.—A Revolution at Hand.—Internal Dissensions.—Another Bayan.—Toto.—Fangkue Chin.—Pirate or Patriot?—Mongol Defeat at Kiukiang.—Retrieved at Hangchow.—Disgrace and Murder of Toto.—The last Mongol Champion.—Condition of the Country.—The Occasion for throwing off a Foreign Yoke.—The Man still wanting.

OWING to the prompt measures of Bayan, Prince Timour, Kublai's grandson, was proclaimed Emperor under the style of Chingtsong. He retained possession of the throne for thirteen years, during which he governed the country with moderation and with a palpable desire to win the sympathy of the people over whom he reigned. Ill health, and anxiety on the

score of the claims of others to the throne, prevented his undertaking any extensive operations at a distance from the base of his power, and Timour's reign was the very opposite to his father's, in that it beheld no foreign wars or costly expeditions beyond sea. The bent of his own inclination was further strengthened by a great famine which visited the northern provinces and produced a vast amount of suffering.* The preservation of peace became a matter of sheer necessity. When the scarcity passed away it left other evils in its train, and prominent among these were the exactions of bands of brigands who traversed the country with almost complete impunity. Timour's attention was repeatedly called to the subject, but all he could do only availed to make a slight impression on the wrong-doers.

When, however, these brigands attempted to combine, and sought to attain other objects than mere plunder, their formidable character vanished. In small parties they were to be dreaded, but as soon as they collected in the proportions of an army they came within the reach of the Mongol garrisons, and were speedily dispersed. The anxiety shown by Timour to relieve the necessities of his suffering subjects and to repress the exactions of tyrannical governors, obtained for him the sympathy and, to some extent, the support of many of the Chinese. The great Mongol chiefs and

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* Mailla, vol. ix. p. 464. At first Timour did not wish to reside at Pekin, but the representations of a minister, who said that he should have a fixed place of residence and thus be the pole-star of the nation, prevailed.

the princes of the House of Genghis had been allotted possessions throughout the Empire which they ruled in a semi-independent manner, and in their own districts they had assumed not only the right of raising taxes, but also the power of life and death. Timour abolished these privileges by decreeing that for the future no one could be sentenced to death without his express authority. All these measures tended to make his person if not his race more popular with the mass of the Chinese.

In many respects Timour had no choice save to rest contented with what had been accomplished. Kublai had done so much that there was very little left for his successor to perform. He often, indeed, received the formal expression of the results of previous triumphs; and among the most notable of these must be placed the embassy sent from Mien or Burmah, where a new king had ascended the throne. There had been some symptoms* that this potentate had entertained thoughts of casting off the tie which bound him to the Mongols, but the arrival of the embassy with the tribute dispelled all apprehension on this score. Timour showed his prudence by issuing strict injunctions to the officers in Yunnan to refrain from molesting the Burmese frontier, and to content themselves with keeping the roads open and in a secure state for purposes of trade.

In the north, meanwhile, the rising under Kaidu still lingered on, without any important occurrence, it is true,

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* Mailla, vol. ix. p. 468.

yet threatening at any time to break out into serious proportions. The expense of maintaining an army in the field in these northern regions was very considerable, and even two victories won by a general named Changar over Kaidu's lieutenants were only an inadequate equivalent for it. In A.D. 1298, the effect of these victories was almost nullified by a disaster inflicted on the Imperial arms, when Timour's forces were surprised, and their commander, Kolikisse, the Emperor's son-in-law, preferred an honourable death to an ignominious surrender. The continuation of this struggle presents no features of interest, although it long remained a serious element of weakness at the root of the Mongol power. Even Kaidu's death from chagrin at a defeat, in A.D. 1301, failed to put an end to the strife.

In the south the Burmese question assumed a fresh turn in these later years. The rightful king had been dethroned and murdered by his brother, who usurped his place. The Mongol forces thereupon crossed over the frontier from Yunnan, and restored order by replacing in power the prince whom they had recognised in the treaty. Whilst engaged in this task, which did not prove very arduous, a more serious matter claimed attention in their rear. A minister had proposed to Timour that he might win a cheap renown by the conquest of the country of Papesifu,* in the south-west of China; and in a weak moment Timour had

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* Papesifu was a country on the eastern Burmese frontier, probably Laos. See Yule, vol. ii. p. 91.

listened to the representations of his flattering counsellor. An army of twenty thousand men was collected for the purpose of invading this remote territory, which possessed no other value or importance than that of being an easy prey for enabling Timour to hand down his name to posterity as a conqueror.

The expedition revealed unexpected dangers. One-third of the force perished from the effects of the climate before it reached its destination, and the commander was compelled to exact so much in the southern provinces of Kweichow and Yunnan that the people rose up and endeavoured to cast off the Mongol yoke. The intended conquest of Papesifu resolved itself into the necessity of defending a territory that had been subjected more than half a century against the efforts of an insurgent population. Songlongtsi, a chief of the people in this quarter, and Chentsiei, the wife of a local official, who had both suffered greatly at the hands of the military commander, placed themselves at the head of the disaffected, and, combining with their forces large numbers of the Miaotse and other fierce tribes of the hills and woods of Kweichow, attacked the towns within their reach. Several of these were captured, and the Mongol general entrusted with the operation against Papesifu was on the point of succumbing to the attack of his more active and numerous enemy, when Koko, Timour's uncle, the governor of Yunnan, arrived with fresh troops and rescued him from his imminent danger.

Encouraged by the example of the people of Kwei-

chow, the tribes of Papesifu and the neighbouring districts assailed the rear-guard and generally hampered the movements of the expeditionary force returning from Burmah. In the numerous skirmishes which were fought the Mongols suffered very serious losses. The whole country from Burmah and Laos to Annam and Tonquin rose up against the invaders; and Timour had to collect a large army from the garrisons of Szchuen, Houkwang and Yunnan for the purpose of restoring his disputed authority. Before these troops could reach the scene of war further reverses had been inflicted upon his arms; and the authority of Songlongtsi and Chentsiei practically displaced his own. Several months were occupied in the preparations for restoring the Imperial reputation and when at last the army was ready to take the field they found that their opponents had retired to the hills, where they occupied strong positions. Owing to the skill of a commander named Lieou Koukia they were expelled from them and pursued for a considerable distance. The restoration of Mongol influence in this quarter was assured by the capture and execution of Chentsiei and the murder of Songlongtsi. Deprived of their leaders, the people returned to their homes, and affairs speedily resumed their normal aspect. None the less it was felt that the origin of the whole trouble was to be found in the rash and unnecessary proposition to invade Papesifu—a scheme which had resulted in addition of neither territory nor reputation to Timour.

The remaining acts of Timour's reign call for no

special comment. Storms, earthquakes and violent tempests visited the land with unusual frequency; but the people were less affected by these phenomena because there was domestic tranquillity. The frontiers were guarded in force, and a satisfactory termination of the question in the north with the other sections of the Mongol family gave Timour good reason for resting satisfied with the aspect of affairs. In A.D. 1306 the Emperor was seized with a malady, which, gradually becoming worse, had a fatal termination in the following year. The Chinese historians praise Timour's character in the strongest terms.* He had done much towards making the Mongol dynasty more Chinese in its views and mode of government; and his subjects could not harden their hearts to virtues which were incontestable, and in face of a manifest desire to propitiate their sympathy. Timour was, there is no reason to doubt, sincerely regretted, and when he died the position of the Mongols in China was certainly not weaker than it was when he ascended the throne.

Timour left no direct heirs, and his nephews, Haichan and Aiyuli Palipata, were held to share between them the right to the throne. An attempt was made to secure the position for Honanta,† Prince of Gansi, and at one time it looked as if the plot would succeed, for Haichan was absent in Mongolia, where he had distinguished himself against Kaidu.

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* See Mailla, vol. ix. p. 487.

† According to one account a grandson of Kublai; according to another an illegitimate son of Timour.—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 489.

Fortunately Aiyuli Palipata was on the spot, and able to take vigorous measures against the pretender, who, when on the point of proclaiming himself Emperor, was suddenly arrested, with his principal supporters, and banished to Tartary. In the moment of triumph there were some who wished Palipata to place himself on the throne, but he possessed the strength of mind to resist the tempting offer. He summoned Haichan from Mongolia to assume the functions of authority, and that prince came, with thirty thousand chosen troops, to take what was his right. He was proclaimed as Haichan Khan or Woutsong,* and the late conspirators were executed to give security to his new authority.

Haichan enjoyed his honours for only five years. During that short period he gave abundant proof of the excellence of his intentions and of his capacity for government. But, like all of his family, he was much addicted to the pleasures of the palace, and his uxoriousness was on a par with his inclination to gluttony and debauchery. He rather discouraged than promoted foreign trade, saying that it was a bad thing to permit the wealth of a country to leave it. With the Tibetans the relations were at this period of the most friendly character, in consequence of the influence of the lamas. The people of Papesifu and that region maintained their independence, and on one occasion inflicted a defeat on a Chinese officer; but, on the whole, Haichan's reign was one of continuous

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* His Chinese title.

peace. His death occurred early in A.D. 1311, when his brother, Aiyuli Palipata,* was proclaimed Emperor in his place. Haichan left two sons, who, temporarily set aside, eventually came to the throne.

Aiyuli Palipata began his reign with a formal announcement to his neighbours of his accession to the throne; and as the Mongols were, owing to the death of Kaidu and the surrender of his son Chapar, more united among themselves than they had been for years, these had the good sense to yield a ready compliance with his demands. All the southern states and kingdoms sent tribute,† and expressed their desire to execute the behests of the Emperor. At a later period embassies came from the Kings of Hien and Mapor.‡ This ruler devoted much of his attention to education, and indeed his reign presents few features of interest, because no events occurred of exceptional importance. An insurrection, headed by his nephew, Hochila,§ son of Haichan, at one moment threatened the Emperor's peace of mind, but it was shortly repressed. Hochila fled the country to find a place of refuge among his kinsmen in the west. Aiyuli Palipata reigned nine years. His death, which was probably caused by the predominant Mongol vice of over-eating, occurred in A.D. 1320, when his son, Chutepala, or Yngtsong, succeeded him.

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* His Chinese name was Gintsong. For the sake of clearness, as the same names occur repeatedly with the change of dynasty, the Mongol title is preserved.

† Elephants and rhinoceroses are mentioned as having been sent.—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 507.

‡ The former an island near Japan; the latter, Mr. Howorth suggests, may have been Malabar.

§ Or Kushala.—Howorth.

Chutepala bitterly lamented the early death of his father, and while he gave himself up to the indulgence of grief, his minister Temudar tyrannised over the people and caused all his enemies at court to be executed. Temudar was on the high road to the attainment of supreme power when Baiju, the commander of the Imperial Guard, and a descendant of Genghis's great general Muhule, intervened and ousted Temudar from the ascendant position he coveted and was steadily acquiring. Chutepala was, fortunately, not blind to the faults of Temudar, and felt towards Baiju admiration for his personal courage and the sympathy of an equal age; for, when Baiju was absent, Temudar, striving to regain his lost ground, presented himself at the palace. Chutepala refused to give him an audience, and Temudar died soon afterwards either of chagrin or, more probably, of poison self-administered. After Temudar's death Baiju's position became more assured, and he may be said to have exercised all the functions of authority.

Fresh conspiracies were formed against the young ruler and his adviser; and Tiechi, Temudar's son, anxious to avenge his father's death, and fearful of the consequences of that father's acts of tyranny, which were becoming better known every day, placed himself at the head of a plot for murdering the Emperor and giving the throne to Yesun Timour, another of the grandsons* of Kublai Khan. The plot succeeded better than it deserved. Baiju was mur-

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* Son of Kanmala. See *ante*, p. 580.

dered in his tent, and Chutepala, after a short reign of three years, shared the fate of his brave companion and faithful minister.*

Yesun Timour, who had taken no part in this plot, and who, the instant he received intelligence of the conspirators' plans, had sent messengers to warn Chutepala, was then placed on the throne.† But his first measures showed how much he disapproved of the means which had been employed to bring him to the head of affairs. Tiechi and his principal confederates were arrested and executed. Their goods were confiscated to the state, and their families experienced all the suffering held to be their due for having produced such criminals.

The five years, during which Yesun Timour occupied the throne, were years of peace, and no event occurred of unusual importance. He was the first of the Mongols to set his face against the votaries of Buddhism,‡ and passed several edicts tending to limit the numbers of the Mongol priests or lamas. These precautions against the innovations of an alien religion, and the terrible earthquakes and other dire visitations from which the country suffered, were the only

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* Chutepala was only twenty-one years of age when he died.—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 533. Du Halde is again misleading on this point. He calls him thirty, which, on his own showing, was impossible, as his father Aiyuli Palipata would have been only nine years old at his birth. In fact, Du Halde's historical summary is, in details, most misleading, if not absolutely inaccurate.

† His Chinese name was Taiting.

‡ On the subject of religions in China see, for a most interesting description of Christianity there at this period, Colonel Yule's "Cathay and the Way Thither."

notable events of the reign. His death occurred in A.D. 1328.*

Yesun Timour's death proved the precursor of many troubles. His two sons were in turn proclaimed Emperor, but their tenure of power was so brief that they are not recognised. Hochila, the banished son of Haichan, was recalled, and, when Yesun Timour's sons had been got rid of, placed upon the throne. Hochila owed his elevation to the talents of his younger brother, Tou Timour, who gracefully made way for his elder; but he did not long enjoy the privileges of absolute power. Proclaimed in A.D. 1329, he suddenly died in the same year, and it is strongly suspected that his end was hastened by foul means. His brother, Tou Timour, had shown symptoms of regret at having surrendered the power he had acquired, and upon his brother's death hastened to seize the attributes of sovereignty. Tou Timour was the eighth prince of the Mongol dynasty.†

The reign of the new ruler, although covering a rather longer space of time, presents as few features of interest as any of the preceding reigns. There is no evidence, unfortunately, throwing light upon the effect these repeated changes in the person of the ruler had upon the opinion of the great mass of the Chinese people. It cannot be doubted, however, that they strengthened the hostile feeling against a foreign domination, at the same time that they showed that

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* During his reign, Friar Odoric of Pordenone visited China, and has left a description of it. See "Cathay and the Way Thither."

† His Chinese title was Wentsong the Second.

the governing race was beginning to forget that the whole fabric of its power depended on the unity that might exist among themselves. These repeated changes* in the person of the ruler boded ill for the long duration of Mongol power in China. They showed that the conqueror was becoming oblivious to the fact that the conquered still existed in their millions and might easily acquire fresh courage.

The most noteworthy event that history has preserved of the reign of Tou Timour is his reception of the Grand Lama of Tibet, who visited his court in the year of his accession. Always a devoted Buddhist, Tou Timour was seized with a frenzy of religious zeal by what he regarded as so auspicious an event, and he issued an order to all his courtiers to bend the knee to the Lama whenever they addressed him. The disdain with which the haughty Mongol soldiers and barons received this order can be imagined. Nor were the Chinese themselves more pleased at the deference shown to the representative of a foreign and always much-hated religion. The President of the Hanlin College boldly refused to concede the mark of honour which the Emperor had wished to enforce.†

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* It will be noted that six rulers, that is from Haichan to Tou Timour, both inclusive, reigned less than twenty-five years; and that excludes Yesun Timour's two sons.

† "You are the disciple of Fo," he said, addressing the Grand Lama, "and the master of all the bonzes; and I am the disciple of Confucius, and the head of all the literati of this Empire. Confucius is not one whit less illustrious than Fo; therefore, there is no need for so many ceremonies between us." The Grand Lama showed his tact by smiling and placing himself in the same posture as that of the Chinese President.—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 550.

During the greater portion of this reign an insurrection prevailed in the south-western provinces of the Empire. In Yunnan and the adjoining parts of Szchuen the rebels expelled the Mongol troops and subverted the existing administration. It required a great effort, and the direction of a large body of troops from other quarters of the Empire, before tranquillity and the authority of the Mongols were fairly re-established. But Tou Timour troubled himself little with this complication, although it threatened his power very nearly, and he preferred to devote his attention to court ceremonies and religious rites. He did not, however, permit his superstition to interfere with his worldly pleasures. His death in A.D. 1332 exercised no perceptible influence on the fortunes of the Mongols, which were now steadily on the decline.

A child* was proclaimed Emperor, but dying within a few months of his proclamation, a fresh arrangement had to be made. Tohan Timour, the eldest of the children of Hochila, and at this time a boy of thirteen years of age, was, after some delay caused by the intrigues of an ambitious minister, raised to the throne. Tohan Timour assumed the name of Chunti, and his reign, while being marked by a succession of misfortunes, witnessed the rapid decadence and fall of the Mongol power. At the very beginning of his reign Chunti showed himself a weak and vacillating prince, from whom little good could be expected. The

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* Ilinchepan or Ningtsong, son of Hochila.

difficulties by which he was surrounded were of the gravest character, for the people were being goaded into desperation by sufferings of no ordinary kind. The annals of the last fifty years of Mongol power contain one long list of terrible visitations, which reached their culmination in the second year of Chunti's reign in a famine, during which it is computed that no fewer than thirteen million persons died.*

But the conflict of the elements was a matter of trivial importance in comparison with the storm gathering in the breasts of the Chinese. The people who had not refrained, during the prime of Kublai's power, from showing their ineradicable antipathy to their alien rulers, were now encouraged by the marked deterioration in the qualities of the governing race to give unequivocal expression to their long-concealed hatred. In the prevailing troubles they saw the clearest token† of the anger of Heaven against the conqueror, and anxiously speculated on the prospect of the revolution which was beginning to loom in the near future.

Several attempts were made to depose the young Emperor, and in A.D. 1335 a desperate attack on the palace, headed by some of the chief members of the Mongol family, was only repulsed by the valour and timely precautions of Bayan, a descendant of the great general of the same name. The leaders in this

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* Mailla, vol. ix. p. 563.

† A popular ballad was circulated at this time with the following refrain :—"Heaven causes it to rain hairs, the discontent of the people daily increases, and the Empire is on the eve of experiencing a revolution."—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 563.

rising were fortunately all captured, and expiated their treason with their lives. Instead of then devoting himself to the task of reforming the evils in the administration, and of mitigating the misfortunes of the people, Chunti turned from the path of duty to follow the course of pleasure, and passed most of his time in the chase. The remonstrances of the censors who strove to perform their duties with care and impartiality failed to show him the folly of his actions, and even the growing dangers which surrounded him only partially roused him to the gravity of the situation.

The first distinct rising on the part of the Chinese occurred in A.D. 1337, when Chukwang, a native of Kwantung, raised a considerable force and proclaimed that the Mongols had ceased to reign. The example thus set was followed in several of the neighbouring provinces. These insurrectionary movements, which were badly organised, and, composed to a large extent of the scum of the people, failed to attract any general amount of sympathy or support from the nation. The Mongol troops succeeded, without any great delay or difficulty, in restoring order and in re-asserting their master's authority.

In this hour of anxiety the Mongols, afraid of the Chinese officials, and wishing to take precautions in good time, ordered that all arms and horses should be surrendered by the Chinese. It is probable that in seeking to evade a danger they only precipitated the course of events, and that many who were disposed to stand by them found themselves compelled to attach themselves to the national party and to array

themselves on the side of those who had resolved upon the expulsion of the Mongols.

The great qualities of one Bayan had contributed as much as any other circumstance to the consolidation of the Mongol power in China; and by the irony of fate it was reserved for the bad qualities of another of the same family and name to expedite its fall. This later Bayan tyrannised over the people placed under his authority, as might be expected from one who, to strengthen his position at court, had soiled his hands with the blood of an Empress. Showing slight respect for even the person of the Emperor, he cared more for the advancement of his own ends than for the interests of the dynasty. Chunti does not seem to have felt the loss of the functions of government; but when Bayan assumed a more magnificent train than that of the Emperor, and aspired to surpass him in his equipages, the growing power and arrogance of this subject appeared in a more unfavourable light to the last Emperor of the House of Genghis. When his vanity was touched the crimes of Bayan, which had been long condoned, became heinous in the eyes of Chunti. In A.D. 1340 this too-powerful minister was deposed from his high place by a coalition* between his personal enemies and those who wished to restore the Emperor's independence.

During the fifteen years that followed the disap-

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* Prominent among its members was Toto, nephew of Bayan. See Mailla, vol. ix. p. 573–75.

pearance of Bayan, Chunti's court was the scene of continual disputes between rival ministers, while, by some strange coincidence, the country suffered from drought and famine, from the overflow of the Hoangho, and from tremendous earthquakes. The insurrections which had at first been composed of pure adventurers were gradually taking a more definite form, and some had even gone so far as to claim that they were fighting for a restoration of the old dynasty. But still the Mongol troops were uniformly victorious, and the Chinese only rose to be repressed and slaughtered by their more disciplined opponents. On the sea, however, the pirate Fangkue Chin bade defiance to the Mongol fleet, which had lost its old efficiency, and captured the generals sent against him. On land, too, the rebels had taken a distinctive sign to mark the popular cause. Their leaders had given out red bonnets* as their head-gear, and these became the bond of union between the foes of the Mongol.

In A.D. 1352 the first important success of the war was obtained at Kiukiang, when a Mongol detachment was annihilated. The principal of the rebels, Sinchow Hoei, assumed the title of Emperor and followed up his success at Kiukiang by a rapid advance into Chekiang, when he menaced the famous city of Hangchow. The Mongol forces, hastily assembled from all quarters, proceeded to engage this army, and in a great battle recovered everything that had been lost. But for the continued successes of Fangkue

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* Mailla, vol. ix. p. 593.

Chin the Mongols would have retrieved whatever they had suffered, and on all sides. In A.D. 1354 there was a fresh outbreak; but the measures adopted by Toto, Chunti's minister, proved so effectual that the Mongol position may be said to have been at this point as much assured as it had been at any time since the commencement of this internal struggle.

Toto had barely succeeded in restoring some degree of order to the condition of affairs in the realm when he found himself the object of Chunti's suspicion and disfavour. A rival named Hama, who owed his fortune to Toto, and doubtless felt "the debt immense of endless gratitude," had maligned him during his absence fighting the enemies of the state, and succeeded in inducing Chunti to sign a warrant for his dismissal and arrest. When Toto returned, therefore, to the capital it was only to receive an order for his banishment. Hama completed his perfidy by sending Toto the poisoned cup, usually the portion or the solace of the unfortunate minister. With Toto disappeared the last possible champion of the Yuen or Mongol dynasty.

The country had been in a distracted state for a long time, and the Chinese, who had been brooding over their wrongs, had now for twenty years been accustomed to the spectacle of slaughter, and become hardened to the bitter struggle for their emancipation. But they had not yet combined. Their efforts had hitherto been spasmodic and disunited. Their principal leaders had shown themselves little better than brigand chiefs. With each fresh effort, however, their

courage was rising higher, and their action acquiring greater method. Union was fast displacing disunion, and their untrained levies were learning discipline in the field and under the hard master defeat. The discord among the Mongols, and the murder of their greatest leader further increased the prospect of an auspicious result. The occasion for throwing off the Mongol yoke had evidently arrived, and it only needed that the time should produce the man.

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History of China. By Demetrius Charles Boulger, Member of the Royal Asiatic Society, Author of 'England and Russia in Central Asia,' 'Yakoob Bey of Kashgar,' etc. Vol. I. London: W. H. Allen & Co. 1881. Pp. 604.

MR. BOULGER'S labor on the two previous works quoted in the title-page of this one has probably suggested the preparation of a compend of Chinese history which should furnish English readers with a digest of its leading events, and aid them in following the growth and fortunes of the Black-haired Race. We have now become comparatively well acquainted with the Chinese of the present day, and an attempt to narrate the changes and describe the great actors in their long past is likely, if well done, to meet the wishes of many readers. In a short preface the author says that Gibbon's remark, "that China has been illustrated by the labors of the French," is almost as true now as it was in 1781.

"It is they also," he adds, "who have at all periods been more willing than we have been to recognize the innate strength and greatness of the Chinese nation. The task of supplying what has appeared to be a want in our literature, and of popularizing the subject of Chinese history, has been very congenial to me; and if I have only succeeded in making the subject in any degree as much a cause of pleasure and instruction to others as its study has proved to myself, I may indulge a hope that something of the reproach of being behind our neighbors in the interest we take in China may be removed."

Bringing this spirit of candor to the execution of his task, Mr. Boulger, unlike most English writers, is willing to judge the Chinese by their own opportunities; and to estimate their advances in good government and morality by their own standards and circumstances. His non-residence among them, therefore, has had one advantage—he is not always disparaging their actual condition. His principal authority in this epitome is the 'Histoire de la Chine,' translated by the Jesuit Père Mailla from the native compend called 'Tung Kien Kang-muh,' and published after his death by Abbé Grosier, in 1777-1783, in twelve quarto volumes. But this work is by no means a double translation; it is rather a digest of the information in the original, and we must not look for minute accuracy. The author has also consulted 'La Chine,' the excellent résumé of the late French sinologue G. Pauthier, whose knowledge of his subject gives weight to his opinion. The work has, we think, been fairly well done. The reader will obtain from it a just idea of the dynastic changes through which the Chinese have passed since the destruction of the feudal system, B.C. 220, and their gradual welding into a homogeneous people. It sketches their history from the earliest times, about B.C. 2637, down to A.D. 1350, and gives a synopsis of the successive ruling families. The Chinese reckon twenty-six dynasties *in toto*, and all but two are here noticed; while among these the four great names of Han, Tang, Sung, and Yuen occupy two-thirds of the volume. Their varying fortunes, struggles for power, and the diverse characters of the successive sovereigns, are on the whole narrated in a lively and clear style. Mr. Boulger has also looked at later books, but with no material advantage to his narrative. One extract, summarizing the deeds and character of the first Mongol Emperor, Kublai, whose life fills fifty pages, will show his style:

"After Kublai's last journey to the northern frontier his bodily infirmities increased so much that it was generally perceived that the end could not be far distant. In A.D. 1294, after the appearance of a comet in the preceding year, which the Chinese took advantage of to reform his administration, Kublai fell ill and died. He was then in the eightieth year of his age, and had occupied the throne for thirty-five years. Twenty-three years had elapsed since he gave his dynasty the Chinese name of Yuen, and during the last sixteen years he had been the acknowledged ruler of the whole of China.

"With regard to the private character and domestic life of this prince, we owe most of the details to that vivacious gossip and remarkable traveller, Marco Polo. That Kublai was destitute of natural affection could not be sustained in view of his evidently unaffected grief at the loss of his wife Honkilachi and his eldest son Chinkin; but there is much corroborative evidence of the charges brought against him by the Chinese historians of having been too much addicted to such weaknesses as the love of money and a morbid inclination for superstitious practices, and he was also undoubtedly of a sensual nature. But, admitting these faults and shortcomings, there remains a long list of virtues and high qualities in his favor. If he was not the greatest of Chinese emperors—and that he certainly was not—his character is sufficiently vindicated by the events of his reign. They show him to have been well able to maintain a great empire at its height, and to lead his people into the paths of peace and prosperity.

"Kublai's long reign is not less remarkable if regarded from the standpoint of its being the climax of the triumph of a more vigorous race over a weaker. The greatest of the Mongol achievements, greater in its way than the march across Asia to the confines of Austria and the Persian Gulf, was undoubtedly the conquest of China. It had foiled the efforts of Genghis and his immediate successors, and all the credit of success was reserved for Kublai. The praise for having accomplished the most arduous of all the undertakings that formed part of the original Mongol programme belongs, therefore, to this prince. The Chinese were subdued and reduced by him to the condition of subjects of the Great Khan; but there can also be no question that they were throughout the most unwilling of subjects. Kublai showed that he knew how to conquer them, but it was above his capacity to reconcile them to his rule. Perhaps the task was impossible; but his later public acts were conspicuously deficient in the tact and judgment required for popularizing his authority" (pp. 583, 584).

If we have commended the candor of our author in his estimate of the Chinese, we cannot say as much for his accuracy. He is evidently totally ignorant of the Chinese language, and has, in consequence, fallen into many mistakes, and been misled by similarity of sounds. For instance, in a note on page 6, he says: "Before his reign the sovereigns of China were called *wangs* or kings. The name of the King of Heaven, or God, was *Changti*, Supreme Emperor or sovereign. *Hoangti* means the Yellow Emperor; but it henceforth became a usual title for the first ruler of a new dynasty [illegible]

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MDZ Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum Digitale Bibliothek

Boulger, Demetrius Charles

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